PILGRIMAGE

TO

JERUSALEM AND MOUNT SINAI.

BY BARON GERAMB,

MONK OF THE ORDER OF LA TRAPPE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

PHILADELPHIA:

CAREY AND HART.

1840.

Printed by
Haswell, Barrington, and Haswell.

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PILGRIMAGE

JERUSALEM AND MOUNT SINAI.

LETTER XXXVI.

Preparations for leaving Jerusalem—Last Farewell to the Sanctuaries at Bethlehem; the Tombs of Mary and Joseph; the Grotto of the Agony; the Garden of Olives—Last Night passed in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre—Grief at leaving those sacred Places—Departure from Jerusalem for Jaffa—The Plague in the Holy City—M. Catafago, Austrian Vice-Consul—Ravages of the Plague at Rome—Jaffa—Ibrahim Aga, the Governor; his Cruelty—Wedding of M. Catafago's Nephew.

Jaffa, May 14th, 1832.

I HAD fixed my departure from Jerusalem for the 7th of this month, and I could not think of it without a feeling of intense pain. Never had my heart inclined so strongly towards any object as it inclined towards that unfortunate city; never had it experienced such lively impressions. The miser does not love his treasure, the husband his wife, the fondest of mothers her first-born, more dearly than I loved Jerusalem. The most delicious days of my life I had spent there, at Bethlehem, in Judea. When wet to the skin from a soaking shower, stiff with cold, bespattered with mud, I crossed the brook Cedron; or panting, covered with dust and perspiration, scorched by the sun, fainting with fatigue, I thus ascended, several times a week, the Mount of Olives; I felt incomparably happier than I had been in my apartments, surrounded

by all that can gratify the senses ; incomparably happier than I had been when, young, glowing with health, bedizened, and perfumed, I mounted the staircases of kings to participate in the pleasures and splendour of their entertainments.

Determined to pass the last days far from all distraction, and to think of nothing but my God, I had made preparations for my departure some time beforehand. The precious objects which I meant to take with me had been carefully packed in cases, after having been blessed on the tomb of our Saviour, and deposited for a moment in each sanctuary. I wished, above all, to anoint all those sanctuaries with oil of roses, before leaving them for ever, and I had provided myself with a sufficient quantity of that perfume. The horses for the journey were ready. I belonged, if I may so say, entirely to myself ; and I had yet left me two days, every hour of which I intended to make good use of.

On the 4th, very early in the morning, I set out on horseback for Bethlehem. The roads being unsafe, I reinforced my guide with an armed Bethlehemite. We had not proceeded a quarter of a league, before we perceived, at a distance, some persons walking in the same direction as ourselves, and one of whom, turning towards us, began to call us with loud cries. I advanced, and soon found myself in the presence of an elderly man, who intreated me to take up his son behind me, and to carry him to Bethlehem. I was in haste ; the lad was dirty and ill clad . . . . . but, how refuse to take up a child on the road to Bethlehem ! I complied, and bound him to me with my handkerchief, desiring him, by a sign, to hold fast.

On reaching the rising ground of St. Elijah, being considerably in advance of my guide and my Bethlehemite, I suddenly descried, twenty paces from me, seven or eight Turks, armed with muskets, pistols, and sabres, who appeared to be lying in ambush there. On my approach, one of them stepped forward, as if to prevent me from passing. My mare was an excellent animal ; I might face about, and dart away with the swiftness of lightning : but the consideration that the boy, of whom I had

taken charge, might run the risk of falling; perhaps, also, a little vanity, and a sense of honour—all these, together, determined me to proceed. The Turks, who had remained concealed, suddenly rose. He who had come forward into the road did not molest me. I passed very close to him; not without some alarm, I must confess; and pursued my route, while all looked at me without uttering a word. When I was at some distance, I turned round to look for my travelling companions. They had approached the Turks, along with the father of the boy behind me. As they did not continue to follow, I imagined that they were stopped, and this was a fresh cause of alarm for me. Fortunately, my apprehension was not long: five minutes afterwards they rejoined me. I learned from them, that these Turks, who had immediately replaced themselves in ambuscade at the same spot, belonged to the village of St. John in the Desert; that they were waiting for some wealthy inhabitant or other of Bethlehem to pass, with the intention of seizing and keeping him as an hostage, till, as they said, another Bethlehemite, who was in their debt and had absconded, should come back and pay them.

Strange conduct! singular justice! according to which all the townsmen of the runaway were held responsible for an obligation, for which none of them had made himself security!

On my arrival at Bethlehem, I learned that the plague was ravaging its environs. I proceeded straightway to the Grotto of the Nativity. There I tarried some time in prayer, meditating anew on the ineffable mystery of mercy which was there accomplished, and repeating my humble homage to the divine Infant, who had deigned to be born there, and to suffer for us.

Bending over the manger, my soul agitated with gratitude and love, I began with trembling hand to anoint it with oil of roses. At four o'clock I uttered there, for the last time, the sweet names of Jesus and Mary, and bade farewell to those august places, deeply grieved to think that I was quitting them for ever. A few minutes afterwards, I was on the road to Jerusalem.

On reaching the monastery of St. Elijah, at the mo-

ment when the hill was about to intercept Bethlehem from my sight, I cast upon it a look of regret; as I thought, it was the last . . . But all at once this painful idea :—"I shall never see it more!" darted across my mind and stopped me. I determined to bid it once more adieu, and, scampering over the ground I had just traversed, I regained the point from which I had started; and my eyes, moistened with tears, were fixed for another quarter of an hour on the cradle of my Saviour.

Next morning, by daybreak, I was on horseback, to pay a last visit to the places in the vicinity of the Holy City. I first went to the tomb of Mary, where the Greek sacristan, to whom I had given notice of my intention, was waiting for me. I anointed that august tomb with oil of roses, as I had done at Bethlehem. On re-ascending the steps, I entered the tombs of Joseph, Joachim, and Anna, then went to the grotto of the Agony, and thence to the garden of Gethsemane. On reaching the Mount of Olives, I hastened to anoint the print of our Lord's foot; after which, from the top of that hill, I took a long and last survey of the plain of Jericho, the Dead Sea, and the Jordan.

Descending the Holy Hill, and following the brook Cedron, I once more saluted the tombs of Jehoshaphat, Zachariah, and Absalom, and went to look again at the fountain of Siloa. I then pursued my course to Mount Sion, where I cast a look at the Hall of the Last Supper, the house of Caiaphas, and the spot where Mary yielded up her soul to God. I paused before the asylum to which the Christians of Jerusalem had come "to sleep their last sleep;" I prayed for the repose of their souls, and envied their lot. I then made a circuit of the walls of the Holy City at a gallop, slackening my pace only to contemplate once more the valley of Jehoshaphat, the Golden gate, and the Sterquilinian gate.

I had desired the dragomans of the monastery of St. Saviour to give notice to the Turks, who had the custody of the church of the Holy Sepulchre, to be at five o'clock in the afternoon at that temple, in which I purposed to pass the last night. As soon as I had alighted from my horse, I went thither. The doors opened at my approach,

and closed again as soon as I had crossed the threshold. The creaking of the hinges of those colossal doors, the noise of the keys and of the bolts, which had so often struck my ear, without exciting any sensible emotion, now produced a sort of shudder . . . . .

The clock had just struck one in the morning. The Franciscan Fathers, assembled in their church, were singing the *Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel*, when I rose to anoint the sacred tomb, before which I had long been kneeling. The scent of the perfumes spread far around.

I then ascended to Golgotha, and repeated the same act at the spot where the cross was formerly erected.

In the course of my life, I have experienced severe afflictions. I have closed the eyes of a good father, of a tender mother, of a dear wife ; I have lost beloved children ; I have been arrested two hundred leagues from France, and dragged across all Germany to be shut up in the castle of Vincennes, from which I was not released till the entry of the allies ; I have undergone what the world calls great misfortunes ; I have been calumniated, persecuted ; I have met with ingratitude : but, calling Him to witness who searches all hearts, and before whom I shall, perhaps, soon appear, I declare that never did sorrow so deeply affect my soul as that which seized it when I tore myself away for ever from the church of the Holy Sepulchre. While I live, it will not cease to be as vividly present to my mind as deeply engraven on my heart ; the recollection of it will always thrill me, because it will always remind me more forcibly than any other recollection of Jesus crucified for my salvation, and for the salvation of the whole human race ; that Jesus, to whom I owe the ineffable happiness of comprehending, of feeling, that great truth, which I would fain make the whole world comprehend and feel, that " He is everything, and that whatever is not He is nothing."

At six in the morning of the 7th of May, I left Jerusalem, after taking leave of the good Franciscan Fathers,

who had shown me the utmost kindness and attention during the five months that I had passed with them.

As the roads continued to be dangerous for travellers, I joined M. Catafago, Austrian vice-consul at St. Jean d'Acre, who, since the siege of that town, had resided at Nazareth. He had come to spend the last weeks of Lent at Jerusalem, and was going to Jaffa. Some Armenians increased our caravan, which consisted of eighty persons.

No sooner had we departed than the monastery of St. Saviour was closed for fear of the plague, which prevailed in the environs of Bethlehem. This apprehension was but too well founded; for, the day after our departure, two persons died of that disease in the convent of the Armenians.

The road to Jaffa runs through Rama; the contagion had reached the latter place, and was daily carrying off a great number of victims there. Our caravan took the precaution to skirt the walls of Rama, and to proceed, and pass the night in tents pitched in a plain, three leagues from Jaffa. I accompanied it; but I preferred lying in the open air, wrapped in my cloak, beside my mules and my baggage.

Next morning, when we were preparing to pursue our route, we were informed that the plague was raging also in the gardens surrounding the town; we were even assured that it had passed the walls. As it was of consequence to ascertain beyond doubt how the matter stood, we were going to despatch a courier forthwith, when a relative of M. Catafago's arrived. His report somewhat tranquillized us; the disease had as yet really manifested itself in the gardens alone. We therefore mounted our horses, and soon found ourselves at the gates of Jaffa, which we entered, pressed by a numerous crowd, which rendered impracticable the precautions that we had resolved to take, and that prudence dictated, in such serious circumstances.

I alighted, as usual, at the convent of the Holy Land. I intended to stay there but a short time, impatient as I was to reach Nazareth, which I purposed making for a while my point of departure and return, for visiting and

minutely examining the numerous places of Galilee, which the Lord consecrated by his presence, covered with his miracles. What country, indeed, could I desire to make myself acquainted with, that ought to excite my religious curiosity to a higher degree! what town, above all, was more worthy of it than Nazareth, where he spent twenty years of his mortal life? Several obstacles prevented the execution of this design: the principal was the insecurity of the roads, which were so infested by the Arabs, that Ibrahim Aga, governor of Jaffa, had been obliged to march to check their depredations by striking off a few heads. I awaited, therefore, the departure of M. Catafago, which was to take place immediately after the marriage of his nephew, M. Bernard, with the sister-in-law of the Russian consul, now near at hand.

I have already adverted to the high antiquity of Jaffa; in my fifteenth letter I have told you that, according to a very general opinion, it was founded by Japhet, son of Noah. I have since seen persons who think themselves authorized by some passage or other in Pliny to date back its origin considerably beyond the deluge.

If I had chanced to come to this town in my youth, or even at a later period, before I was a monk, I should have been very anxious to visit the spot where Andromeda was exposed to the sea-monster; I should have sought to discover the place of the ring to which the daughter of Cepheus was fastened, and which, according to St. Jerome's account, still existed in his time. But now I see in Jaffa only the town where the apostle who deserved, by his ardent love to Christ, to become the supreme head of the Church, wrought the greatest miracles; the town where the blessed Virgin embarked for Ephesus with the beloved disciple; the town to which the disobedient prophet retired, and where he embarked for Cilicia, in order to evade the formal command which the Lord had given him to preach repentance to the inhabitants of Nineveh.

Jaffa is still, as at the time of my visit, occupied by the Egyptian troops. The governor, Ibrahim Aga, whose name I have already had occasion to mention, has just returned with a few horses taken from the Arabs, and

several heads, cut off by his soldiers. This Aga commanded at Jaffa for Abdallah ; when Ibrahim Pacha took the town, he was retained in this office. There is not a braver man than Ibrahim Aga : he was formerly a Mameluke, fought desperately against the French at the time of the invasion of Egypt by Napoleon, and was left for dead at the Pyramids. His life has been one incessant battle. Though covered with wounds, he is yet so intrepid, that, with ten of his horse, he never hesitates to attack a hundred well-mounted and well-armed Arabs. He possesses extraordinary address, and is one of the best horsemen that I know. I have ridden out several times with him and a young Pole, a friend of mine, M. Jaba, chancellor to the Russian consulate, when he was pleased to exhibit his skill in the management of the javelin and the lance.

He is severe and cruel : his mere presence strikes terror. The day before yesterday I was taking a ride with him, when, all at once, he perceived a great number of persons who had approached too near to the gardens infected with the plague : he hastily proceeded towards them, and I followed close at his heels. At the sight of him the people fled as a flock of sheep would from a tiger. He chased the fugitives, and struck several persons whom he overtook. I would have interceded for one unfortunate creature palpitating under his blows, and his face exhibiting the paleness of approaching death ; but I was stopped, and I immediately withdrew, vowing not to ride out any more with his excellency.

The wedding, to which I have already alluded, will take place to-morrow. The bridegroom is French, the bride Italian. They will, nevertheless, wear the Turkish costume—the one usually worn by the whole of the consul's family. The bride will have her nails and eyebrows stained, after the fashion of savages—a ridiculous singularity, which the young couple think it right to follow, in order to conform to the customs of the country in which circumstances oblige them to live. In other respects they are persons of piety, and of excellent principles. "I ask of you but one thing," said the bridegroom to his future partner ; "which is, that you respect my father and mother

as I respect them myself, and then I will strive to make you, as long as I live, the happiest of women." I myself heard him utter these touching words of filial affection.

The preparations for the wedding are splendid. In Europe, people have no idea of the luxury displayed on such occasions in the East. The nuptial dress of almost all the females is of crimson velvet, embroidered with gold; to this are added a set of diamonds, fine pearls, and the costliest novelties introduced by the caprice of fashion, which, however, it must be confessed, is much less fickle there than in other countries. The men wear turbans and cachemir shawls of great value, tied round the waist.

The family has requested my company at this wedding, which will take place at night. I thought I could not well accept this invitation. At any rate, I shall witness the ceremony itself from a pew in the church, and I shall participate in it by my prayers and good wishes. The young couple will set out with us, in two or three days, for Nazareth.

LETTER XXXVII.

Departure from Jaffa for Nazareth with M. Catafago and his Family—Supper in his Tent—Mysterious Frame—Excessive Heat—Dust—Lurking Arabs—Fire—Hills of Galilee—Plain of Esdrelon, or Valley of Jesrael—Carmel—Tabor—Bedouins; their Hospitality—Reception of the New-married Couple at Nazareth—Entry into the Town—Visit to the Church.

Nazareth, May 25, 1832.

We left Jaffa on the 21st. Our caravan consisted of more than a hundred persons. All the men were armed. Thither soldiers escorted us: ten marched with the camels and the mules which carried the baggage.

One thing annoyed me much during the whole journey: the horse I rode was detestable; he lay down at the sight of the least object that displeased him. I had not been able to procure a better. Luckily, when he took a fancy to play this annoying trick, he gave notice

by kneeling like a camel, and this allowed me time to leap off, and thereby avoid a dangerous fall.

On arriving in the evening at the place where we were to encamp for the night, our people pitched the tents. According to my custom, I kept apart from the crowd with my baggage. At supper-time, M. Catafago sent me an invitation by his son. I went to his tent, where I found a numerous company. The bride was present, covered with a rose-coloured veil, dotted with silver stars. The supper was laid, as usual, on carpets spread on the ground, and we sat around them, cross-legged, on pillows. The consul had the attention to recollect that I eat no meat. Some of the party ate without fork, as is customary in the East, that is to say, they tore the meat in pieces with their fingers, and took handfuls of pillau (boiled rice), and moulded it into balls. In other respects the family of the consul approached as nearly as possible to the manners of Europe.

The interior of the tent was hung with red silk: everything there was most sumptuous. The women were separated from the men, and had their faces uncovered; only, when a Turk entered, they hastily veiled themselves.

During the repast, I remarked in the tent a large frame, covered with a white veil, which I at first suspected to be a looking-glass. To satisfy myself, I asked what it was. This question of a curiosity perhaps indiscreet, was answered by some one in a manner almost as dry as short: "That belongs to the bride." Madame Catafago, who was not far from me, had heard my question. "Reverend Father," said she, "that veil covers a thing which my niece has always kept in her own room; a thing which has constituted her happiness from childhood; a thing, in short, the sacrifice of which would be more painful to her than any other." As I saw that the good lady wished to make a mystery of it, I said no more: at any rate, I was convinced that it was not a looking-glass. Nevertheless, contrary to all discretion, after supper, I went up to the mysterious object, I lifted a corner of the veil . . . I perceived . . . I will not tell

you what . . . Guess . . . and, if you cannot, wait for my next letter.

On returning to my baggage, stretched upon the grass, I mused for a long time before I closed my eyes on what I had seen . . . When I awoke, I mused on it again.

Next day was a most fatiguing one for us. The heat was excessive. Scorched by a burning sun, without water to quench our thirst, both men and beasts were exhausted. Less would have sufficed to give us an idea of the desolation of Judea by the calamity of drought, so energetically described by the prophet Joel: "How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture . . . for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burnt all the trees of the field. The beasts of the field cry also unto thee; for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness." (Joel i. 18—20.)

Fortunately for us, we had taken the prudent precaution to provide ourselves with a small stock of oranges. Oh! how delicious, how refreshing, is the juice of that fruit in such circumstances! But how ungrateful, how much to be pitied is he, who, before he moistens his parched mouth, does not lift a thankful eye towards heaven!

We were constantly enveloped in a cloud of dust raised by the feet of more than a hundred horses; it was an annoyance which it was impossible to escape, and which nothing but continual efforts of courage enabled us to endure. My horse was obstinately bent on lying down frequently, and, when he did so, I could not make him rise again without belabouring him with the whip; and this operation, besides the dislike I felt to it, added to my trouble and fatigue.

We were watched from a distance by the Arabs, who appeared and vanished like lightning before our janissaries.

At length, after a journey of ten hours, overcome with fatigue, we were impatient to discover a place where we could pass the night, and, above all, find water, which we were in urgent want of. We were fortunate enough

to meet with both the things we needed, amidst a field of wheat that had been recently cut.

I settled myself, as usual, at some distance from the caravan; when an accident, that might have caused a great deal of mischief, suddenly filled us with alarm. We were surrounded by fields, still covered with standing corn. Through the imprudence of a servant, the corn was set on fire, and the flames spread with frightful rapidity; and it was not without the greatest exertions that we succeeded in extinguishing them. I cannot think, without shuddering, of the fatal results which might have attended this accident, if it had occurred during the hours of sleep.

My extreme weariness, however, did not prevent me from thinking of the morrow, which was to be marked by my entry into Nazareth. It was to be a happy day, a holyday, for me. After all my travelling companions were asleep, I was still waking; and the anticipation of my felicity more than once interrupted my short repose.

By two in the morning, my *moucro* (the man who took care of my mules) had already laden my baggage; and I, the first on horseback, hastened our departure as much as possible.

We had been for some time among the hills of Galilee, when, at daybreak, we perceived before us the very beautiful and very fertile plain of Esdrelon, or valley of Jesrael, so celebrated in Scripture for the death of Saul and of Josiah, and in modern history for the meeting of the kings of Jerusalem, Cyprus, and Hungary, when they were attempting to reconquer the holy places. This magnificent plain, about twenty leagues in length, or two days' journey, according to the expression of the Arabs, presented to the eye a most enchanting prospect.

On the left extended a chain of hills, between which was discerned Mount Carmel; before us rose Mount Tabor, like an immense and superb dome, above which the sun, already showing half his disk, surrounded by clouds of gold and crimson, began to pour far around a flood of light.

The air was cool and light. The plain was covered in several places with tents belonging to different tribes of

Bedouins, whose numerous herds were pasturing around them. Horsemen appeared at different points, and long trains of camels were carrying large sheaves of wheat.

As these were friendly tribes, all fear of danger was of course at an end; accordingly, most of the soldiers of our escort left us, and we continued our journey with few guards.

I have already had occasion to mention the touching cheerfulness with which the Bedouins exercise hospitality: it would be difficult to carry that virtue to a higher point. Their chiefs came and entreated us most respectfully to permit them to dress a sheep for us; we declined the offer: they appeared mortified at our refusal, though it was accompanied by the expression of our thanks. Some of our people, however, consented to accept some milk. It was a subject of envy and even of pain to such of these good creatures as had nothing to offer, or whose offers were not accepted.

Rumour had preceded Messrs. Catafago and Bernard, senior, and announced their very speedy return to Nazareth, where they resided during part of the summer, and where they were well known. Almost the whole population was in motion to meet them, and to receive the new-married couple with demonstrations of joy. The multitude was headed by a great number of horsemen, magnificently mounted and armed, acting a sham-fight. The hills re-echoed the shouts of joy, and the reports of muskets and pistols, with which were mingled the sounds of instruments, and particularly the tambourine.

An accident, that might have been serious, suspended the rejoicings for a few moments. The horses manœuvred in unequal and stony roads, where it was difficult to guide them. That of M. Louis Catafago, the consul's eldest son, ran away with him, and suddenly fell in so dangerous a spot that we thought it was all over with him. Fortunately, however, he rose without sustaining any injury, and we came off with the fright.

The nearer we approached, the greater became the concourse: the shouts of joy and the discharges of fire-arms were redoubled. Amid this noisy train was seen the bridegroom, mounted on a splendid Arabian mare,

sumptuously caparisoned; for which, by the way, he had refused an offer of fifteen thousand francs. The bride, covered from head to foot with a very richly embroidered veil, was led by two Arabs; her own and her husband's mother, who were about ten paces behind her, wept for joy. Everybody, out of respect, kept at a distance from them.

All this rejoicing, however, all the pomp of the scene before me, did not cause me to forget that I was a pilgrim, and only a league from the august spot where the WORD became flesh: I had constantly kept at as great a distance as I could; and, the nearer we approached, the more I slackened my pace. At length I stopped altogether, waiting till the multitude should be at such a distance that I could not hear its noise. I then pursued my route, and entered Nazareth bare-headed. Father Perpetuus, secretary of the Holy Land, who had arrived from Jerusalem a few hours before, having perceived me from the platform of the convent, hastened down to the door and threw himself into my arms.

I expressed to him my desire to proceed forthwith to the church: he cheerfully conducted me thither; and there, on the very spot of the Incarnation, I spent my first moments in adoring Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, blessed for ever.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Illness—Vermin—Plague—Nazareth—Population—Church—Sanctuary of the Incarnation—St. Louis—Joseph's Workshop—Synagogue from which Jesus was driven by the Jews—Stone Table at which he sometimes ate with his Disciples—Rock from which the Jews designed to throw him—Ruins of a Monastery dedicated to the Virgin Mary—Environs of Nazareth—Enormous Wolf—Mary's Well—Mary's Fountain—Anecdote—Excursion to Mount Tabor—Admirable View—Explanation of the Enigma in the last Letter—Rejoicing of the Christians for the taking of St. Jean d'Acre.

Nazareth, June 10, 1832.

I HAVE been ill, my dear friend. I was silly enough to leave my bed-room windows open at night, and have

paid rather dearly for that imprudence, which is more dangerous here than anywhere else. To-day I am better; but still I am afraid that I have not quite got over it. I continue to feel an extraordinary lassitude, which the want of rest tends to keep up.

The bugs seem to conspire with other vermin, innumerable in this country, to disturb your slumbers, or rather to prevent you from closing your eyes. The natives, though having habitually to endure this species of annoyance, are themselves not accustomed to it: they complain of it as of a plague. Nothing, however, would be easier than to rid themselves of it. The means are simple and attainable alike by the poor and the rich—cleanliness. But, in regard to this point, the utmost degree of indolence universally prevails; and some even entertain a sort of commiseration for these swarms of enemies, which is almost incredible, and which makes them even scruple to destroy them. "What are you doing, brother?"—"Shaking my cloak to get rid of the insects that annoy me."—"But why don't you kill them?"—"Ah! poor things! I can't help pitying them!"—And yet such people lament and complain!

The plague has broken out at Jaffa: it is also making great havoc at Bethlehem and Rama; and it has appeared at Jerusalem, but with less violence. It is said that Beyrout is not free from it, and that this terrible scourge is spreading in the island of Cyprus. We are threatened with it. Shall we be able to escape? I resign myself to the holy and adorable will of God, who strikes and who saves as he sees fit.

Nazareth, which the inhabitants consider as a handsome, well-built place, in comparison with the other towns of this country, is, in reality, but a mean and wretched village. The houses, in general small, and irregularly grouped on the slope and at the foot of a hill, which rises amphitheatrically and overlooks it. The most considerable edifices are:—the monastery, a handsome, extensive structure, built with extreme solidity; an ancient Christian church, converted by the Turks into a mosque; and a very large and commodious *khan*, at the entrance of the town by the Jaffa road.

There are to be seen, besides, a few private houses, which are tolerably well built, and lead you to infer that the owners are in easy circumstances.

The population amounts to about three thousand. It is composed of Catholics, Maronites, schismatic Greeks, and Turks. The first are the most numerous. One thing surprised me much, that is, the mild manners of the Turks, and the kindness which they show towards the Catholics, whom they treat like brothers.

The church is in the interior of the convent. The jealousy of the Turks and the tyranny of the governors prevented its being finished at the time of its erection ; and to this cause must be ascribed the disproportion that exists between its length and its width ; a disproportion which shocks the eye the moment you enter. In other respects it is very handsome, and kept remarkably clean.

This church encloses the ever-blessed spot where the ineffable mystery of mercy and salvation, the divine mystery of the incarnation, took place. Thither it was that "the angel Gabriel was sent from God . . . . . to a virgin, espoused to a man whose name was Joseph : and the virgin's name was Mary ;" and where he announced to her that she should conceive and bear a son, and should call his name Jesus.

You descend to the place where Mary was, by a wide and magnificent staircase of white marble. Like all the other sanctuaries in Palestine, this has an altar erected over it, upon which lamps are kept continually burning. On a slab, likewise of marble, are inscribed in large letters these memorable words ; the most energetic expression of the infinite love of God for mankind :

VERBUM CARO HIC FACTUM EST.

Behind the altar are two rooms, hewn out of the rock, which formed part of the house of St. Joseph. A mere glance is sufficient to convince any one that this is a work of ancient times. The two rooms, together, are twenty feet long and ten wide. The first communicates with the second by a few steps of unequal breadth. In the

latter stands an altar, surmounted by an ordinary picture, representing the Holy Family ; and upon it is inscribed :

HIC ERAT SUBDITUS ILLIS.

In front was constructed another room, which must have been seventeen or eighteen feet in length, and eight or nine in breadth. It was this building which, according to a pious tradition, was carried by angels, at first, to Dalmatia, towards the end of the 13th century ; and, some years afterwards, to Loretto in Italy. On the spot from which it was removed now stand two altars, one on the right, the other on the left, separated by the great staircase leading to the sanctuary.

There are still to be found at Nazareth houses resembling Joseph's ; that is to say, small, low, and communicating in the rear with a grotto, excavated in the side of the hill.

The church of Nazareth is certainly, of all the temples in the world, that which excites the warmest, the tenderest, devotion for the blessed Virgin. Her image is seen everywhere. The Catholic does not pluck a flower but he offers it to Mary, and deposits it on her altar. On all sides appear inscriptions in honour of her. On every door, on every wall, you read the words "ALL HAIL, MARY. In short, that sweet name meets you everywhere.

In the choir of the Franciscan Fathers there is a picture, of large dimensions, representing the Virgin. Though it is not by a skilful hand, the effect is admirable and most graceful. The painter has imparted to the face an expression so gentle and so touching, that, after long pausing to contemplate it for the first time, you presently return to look at it again. It is to the feet of this image that the Catholics of Nazareth come, every day, to offer the tribute of their prayers to whom they consider as being in an especial manner their protectress. Having witnessed their pious solicitude to perform this duty, I could not help wishing that the picture were removed to some other part of the church, where the concourse would not disturb or interfere with the exercises of divine

worship. The choir, at the farther end of which it is now placed, is very narrow, and, as everybody has a right to go into it, even while the monks are performing the service, the consequence is a bustle which cannot but disturb and sometimes interrupt the singing and the ceremonies. The Arab, moreover, is accustomed to pray aloud; he always accompanies his prayer with groans, and strikes his bosom; and to those in the choir this is as serious an inconvenience as the other. But, were it merely that almost continual succession of men, women, and children, incessantly passing and repassing before the good Fathers, this would be more than sufficient to distract, perhaps to disconcert, the most serious piety.

St. Helena caused the first church of any in the East to be erected at Nazareth, and had the sacred places which I have just described inclosed in it. A pillar marked the spot where the angel Gabriel accosted Mary; and another, two feet from it, pointed out that where the Virgin then was. Nothing of the church is left, save a few fragments, indicative of its grandeur; but the first of the two pillars subsists entire. The other was broken by wretches who fancied that there were treasures within it. Near the sanctuary is still to be seen the upper part of it, which, from some unknown cause, by many deemed miraculous, remains suspended from the roof.

In 1251, on the feast of the Annunciation, the 25th of March, St. Louis, the most virtuous of the kings of France, came to receive the communion at the foot of the altar, erected close to these pillars.

"He arrived," say the historians, on the eve of the annunciation of our lady, at Cana, in Galilee, wearing a rough hair-cloth next his skin; thence he went to Mount Tabor, and came the same day to Nazareth. As soon as he perceived that village at a distance, he alighted from his horse and fell on his knees, in adoration of that holy place, where the mystery of our redemption was accomplished. He walked thither on foot, though he was extremely fatigued, and had fasted all day on bread and water. On the following day he caused the whole of the divine service to be performed; that is to say, matins, mass, and vespers. He received the sacrament from the

hands of the legate, who delivered a very affecting sermon on this occasion; so that, according to the remark made by the confessor of that pious prince, in a writing wherein he acquaints us with these particulars, it might be affirmed that, since the mystery of the incarnation was accomplished at Nazareth, never had God been honoured there with more devotion and edification than he was on that day."*

At the distance of one hundred and thirty or forty paces was the house in which Mary's husband followed his trade of carpenter. The place is still designated by the appellation of St. Joseph's workshop. This workshop was transformed into a spacious church, part of which has been destroyed by the Turks: a chapel, which belonged to it, is still left, and there mass is performed every day. Above the altar is a very indifferent picture, representing Joseph at work and assisted by Jesus. It was a present from a noble lady in Florence, who has not omitted to affix to it her name and her arms.

Not far off is the synagogue where Jesus was teaching when he was driven from it by the Jews, and taken to the top of the hill, from which they intended to throw him.

"And he came," says St. Luke, (iv. 16—36), "to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, and stood up for to read.

"And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias, and when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

"The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised;

"To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

* *Histoire de France*, by Daniel, tom. iii., p. 301; and *Histoire ecclesiastique*, tom. xvii., p. 453. Fleury calls the legate Eudes de Chateâuroux. He adds that the king was always provided with costly dresses of different colours, according to the solemnities; and that he took particular care of them.

"And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down: and the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

"And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. . . . .

"And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,

"And rose up and thrust him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.

"But he, passing through the midst of them, went his way."

This synagogue, where Jesus was so sacrilegiously ill-treated, is a vaulted building, of hewn stone, about thirty feet long and fifteen or sixteen wide. It belongs to the schismatic Greeks, who have converted it into a church. The Franciscan Fathers have possession of it, and go thither to say mass.

Three hundred paces from the synagogue is a chapel, in which is enclosed a mass of rock, of irregular shape, about twelve feet long, and nine or ten in its greatest breadth, on which it is believed that our Saviour sometimes took his meals with his disciples. A Latin inscription informs us that, according to tradition, at this stone, called the table of Christ, our Lord ate with his diciples, both before and after his resurrection.

TRADITIO CONTINUA EST ET NUNQUAM INTERRUPTA APUD OMNES NATIONES ORIENTALES, HANC PETRAM, DICTUM MENSA CHRISTI, ILLAM IPSAM ESSE PETRAM, SUPRA QUAM DOMINUS NOSTER JESUS CHRISTUS CUM SUIS DISCIPULIS COMEDIT ANTE ET POST SUAM RESURRECTIONEM A MORTUIS.

I wished to see the steep rock from which the Jews purposed to cast Jesus Christ. I went thither yesterday, and set out rather late, to avoid the heat of a scorching sun. I had no doubt that my guide was perfectly well acquainted with the localities: on the contrary, he needed a guide himself; he took me to a wrong place. We had before us an extremely high rock, whose top seemed to be lost in the clouds: he pretended that this was the very spot that I wished to see. To no purpose I declared that,

according to all that I had been told, and all that I had read, this was not the place; I was obliged to follow him; and there was I, clambering up slowly and with great effort, holding sometimes by projections of the rock, sometimes by roots and shrubs, that I might not tumble into the abyss.

On reaching the top, my man confessed that he was wrong, and that the place to which he should have led me was much lower down. Accordingly, on looking that way, I readily discovered it from the description that had been given me. We experienced great difficulties and incurred the greatest dangers in our way to it. Though I found myself behind some stones, which form a sort of parapet, yet, when I cast my eyes down the precipice, I could not help shuddering. Some writers have asserted that a rapid torrent runs roaring at the foot of it. No torrent ever was there, and I can add that, not only is that place destitute of water, but that it is very scarce in the environs. On one of the stones of the parapet, I remarked the print of a hand. I know not what is its origin, and no one could give me any information concerning it. At the foot of the rock is an altar, at which the Franciscan Fathers, on a certain day, perform a mass, the gospel of which is that passage of St. Luke, which I have quoted above.

In returning to Nazareth, you perceive, about half way, upon a hill, the ruins of a monastery, formerly occupied by nuns; and those of a very handsome church, built by St. Helena, and dedicated to the Virgin Mary, by the name of Our Lady *de Tremore*, of Fright. According to some, Mary was already at this place when the Jews dragged her son to the top of the hill, with the intention of throwing him down from it. According to others, on hearing of the murderous designs of those furious men, she had run out in haste, but had arrived too late, and seized with fright, was unable to go any further. And the holy and excellent mother of Constantine resolved that a religious monument, erected through her means, should commemorate the profound grief of the holiest, the fondest of mothers.

The environs of Nazareth are frequented by wild

beasts; wolves and jackals, especially, are very numerous: it is rarely the case that in an evening you do not meet with some of these animals, near the town. They frequently come in troops, during the night, to devour the dead beasts lying in the streets; they disturb the sleep of the inhabitants by their frightful yells, which the dogs, whose number is very considerable, fail not to answer by their loud barking; and thus, between them, they produce a most distressing and stunning noise. As we were returning, one of these dangerous neighbours passed very close to us: it was a prodigious wolf. Luckily, he was more frightened at sight of us than we were at him.

A quarter of a league distant, is a well, called Mary's. It is now enclosed in the church of the schismatic Greeks, who have erected an altar close to it. Tradition relates that Mary was accustomed to go thither for what water she wanted; and, to convince one's self that this must have been the case, it is sufficient to consider, as I have already remarked, that water is very scarce, both at Nazareth and in the environs.

The road leading thither, bordered with nopals and fruit-trees, forms a charming walk, which the prospects of the neighbouring hills and the fields, covered with corn, renders still more picturesque.

The water of this well, increased by that of another spring, constantly overflows, and runs into a spacious reservoir, constructed a hundred paces farther off, and called Mary's fountain: it is thither that most of the inhabitants go to fetch it. Unfortunately, it is not very abundant, and a week seldom passes but the eagerness of the throng occasions quarrels and broken pitchers. These pitchers are enormous earthen vessels, of disproportionate height. The women of Nazareth carry them on their heads; and, under this heavy load, sometimes having also a child in their arms, they walk with a lightness that is astonishing.

Father Perpetuus was with me, a few days since, at this fountain; he wished, out of devotion, to drink of its water, and asked a woman for some, who readily gratified him. I drank in my turn, and I thought it right to ex-

press my thanks by offering this woman a piece of money. She peremptorily refused it, and even appeared offended, to judge from the significant gestures which she addressed to her neighbours. I was the more surprised, as it was the first time that I had met with a refusal from an Arab. At first I admired her behaviour, and remarked its delicacy to the good Father, not doubting that she had complained because I could think her capable of taking payment for a draught of water. As, however, she continued to grumble, and, after all, the politeness with which I had made my offer seemed to furnish a good excuse, I determined to ascertain what it was that caused her to talk in such an animated tone. We called an interpreter, and soon learned that, not accustomed to have money given her for such a service, she imagined that I had offered her my piece as the price of her pitcher, which she valued at a great deal more. When she was informed that my intention merely was to give her a *bakschish*, her anger was changed into thanks.

Next day, I took a walk to the same place. All strove to be first to offer me their pitchers; but I gave them to understand, by my signs, that I was not thirsty.

On Ascension-day, two Fathers of the Holy Land set out for the monastery, at one in the morning, for Mount Tabor, in order to perform mass there. I accompanied them. Two guides went before us. We were all on horseback: a mule carried the things required for the ceremony.

We passed Mary's fountain; a concourse of people was already there.

The road was unequal and stony; and, consequently, more difficult for me than for the others: with my short-sighted eyes I could scarcely discern the head of my horse in the dark. I was obliged, therefore, to trust entirely to his instinct: fortunately for me, he was a steady animal and accustomed to these roads.

At sunrise, Tabor met our view, apparently quite near, though we were still at a considerable distance from it. To us, it seemed to be totally isolated. Behind it, however, at the western part of its base, rises a very high hill, but it is not perceived when you come from Jaffa

and descend from the hills of Galilee into the plain of Esdrelon. Our guides took us through fields of corn: the observations of the good Fathers, and the severe reproaches added by me, made no impression upon them; they assured us that there was no other way, and we followed without believing them.

The sun had been for some hours above the horizon when we arrived at the foot of Tabor. It was a magnificent morning; a sweet and profound calm pervaded the country; the ground was yet damp with dew; a great number of birds were fluttering and singing about us; and the grass was so high that it came up to our horses' chests. We halted at Debora, a small village, built on the very spot where Sisera, after being defeated by the army of Israel, was killed by Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, to whose tent he had fled, and thence we contemplated, for a few moments, the scene of the miraculous victory gained by her whose name is still borne by the place where we were.

We now began to ascend the mountain. The sides of the Tabor are unequal, rugged, steep, covered with odoriferous trees and shrubs, which spring up out of the interstices of the rocks: wherever grass can grow, the ground is carpeted with verdure and flowers. The paths are almost impracticable, and, stanch as the horses may be, they have the greatest difficulty to get over some of the most dangerous passes. My mare fell in one of these places, in such a manner that I was, I may say, under her. I kept my seat, pressing her flanks: she rose with me, and, thanks be to heaven! where I might have been crushed to death, I received not a scratch.

At length we reached the summit. The writers who have asserted that it terminates in the form of a sugar-loaf, are mistaken. The top is a platform, about half a league in diameter, where you meet with nothing but very high grass, briars, shrubs, small copses on the most elevated points, and enormous piles of stones, the ruins of the churches erected by command of St. Helena to commemorate the mystery which was accomplished there. Game abounds everywhere. The woody places and the hollows of the rocks afford retreats to panthers, wild boars, and other beasts.

Forcing our way with great toil through brambles, thorns, and thick underwood, we came to a chapel in ruins, the only one that is now left. The community at Nazareth go thither on pilgrimage every year, on the day of the Transfiguration, to perform mass, and to chant the following Gospel :

"And Jesus taketh Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

"And was transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

"And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.

"Then answered Peter and said, Lord, it is good for us to be here : if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias.

"While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said : This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ; hear ye him.

"And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces, and were sore afraid.

"And Jesus came and touched them, and said : Arise, and be not afraid.

"And when they had lift up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

"And, as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying : Tell the vision to no man, until the son of man be risen again from the dead."—(Matth. xvii. 1—9.)

St. Matthew, as you see, from the passage that I have quoted, has not named the mountain on which this vision took place ; he merely observes that it was high ; and no more is told us by St. Mark and St. Luke. Some have conjectured that the transfiguration occurred on the mountain of Cæsarea Philippi ; and have assigned for a reason, the too great distance between the place from which Jesus took his apostles and Tabor. But this opinion is neither the most received nor the most ancient. From the earliest ages, the contrary tradition has been

current; and, on this account, the churches and the monastery built by St. Helena on the summit of the Tabor were called the churches and the monastery of the Three Tabernacles.

I confessed myself at the foot of a tree, and had the happiness to communicate at the mass which was said beneath the canopy of heaven. After mass the Gospel was solemnly chanted.

The summit of the Tabor is sometimes so shrouded in fogs, that it is difficult to distinguish even the nearest objects; the spectator is then deprived of the most magnificent view in the world. Fortunately for me, the sky was serene and cloudless, and the weather heavenly.

To the south extended, for the space of fifteen leagues, at least, the theatre upon which Jesus displayed his infinite beneficence by so many miracles. I cast my eyes upon it: moved, affected, my soul filled with recollections, I paused to contemplate it. The immense plain of Esdrelon, from the patches of verdure which mark its best cultivated spots, looks like a prodigious draught-board. A few leagues beyond it, I saw Mount Hermon, at the foot of which is situated the village of Naim, celebrated for the resurrection of the widow's son; still farther, Mount Gilboa; at bottom, Endor, whither Saul sent to consult the witch; and, quite in the background, as the last point of the perspective, the hills of Samaria.

Towards the north, the lake of Nazareth, or sea of Tiberias; the mount on which Jesus addressed his admirable sermon to his disciples; the plain where he fed five thousand persons with five loaves and two fishes; Cana, where he performed his first miracle; and, in the distance, the Mediterranean, presented a picture not less enchanting.

We descended from the Tabor on foot, leading our horses by the bridle, and proceeding cautiously, lest we should meet with wild beasts, the traces of which we had discovered, and which one of our companions even thought that he had perceived among the bushes. On coming to the corn-field through which we had passed in the morning, our guide avoided it, and made us turn into a path on the left. I took it into my head to ascribe the respect which he showed this time for the property

of another to the salutary effect of my rebuke : but I was wrong. He had caught a glimpse of some Turkish mowers, cutting down the corn in the field, and their presence had made him apprehend a more severe and more painful lesson than our reprimands. This we did not fail to remark to him. Alas! how infatuated is man! when doing wrong, he is afraid of being seen by other men who might punish him for it, regardless of that eye which penetrates through the thickest darkness, the eye of Him who will *infallibly* punish.

I was going to close my letter, my dear friend, without giving you the explanation of the riddle that I proposed in my last relative to the veiled frame which I had seen in the tent of the new-married lady, and which she took along with her wherever she went, determined never to part from it. Perhaps you have guessed it? But, if you still need enlightening, it was a beautiful picture of the mother of Jesus Christ, the kind and tender mother of us all! Farewell!

P.S. Acre has just surrendered. I hear the reports of muskets fired in token of rejoicing. Among the Christians there are many who shout for joy, in the hope of being rescued from oppression. Will this be the case? And is then their happiness insured because a rebellious subject has unjustly taken a town from his master?

LETTER XXXIX.

Officers of the Austrian Frigate, La Guerrière—The Jordan—Lake of Genesareth—Capernaum—Tiberias; Plague there—Encampment out of the town—Synagogue—Population of Tiberias—Expectation of the Messiah—Catholic Church at Tiberias—Desert where Jesus miraculously fed the Multitude—Mountain of the Beatitudes—Cana; Site of the House where the marriage was held—Return to Nazareth—Departure of the Officers of the Frigate—The Plague breaks out at Nazareth—The Convent closed—Conduct of the Franciscan Missionaries during the Plague.

Nazareth, June 20, 1832.

A FEW days ago, fatigued by an indisposition, from which I have scarcely recovered, I retired to bed at an earlier hour than usual. I slept soundly for some time.

It was not yet midnight, when an extraordinary noise suddenly awoke me ; people were running to and fro, talking, shouting ; the whole monastery was in a bustle, and, from the confused sounds that reached me, I was unable to guess the cause. Apprehensive that some accident had happened, I rose in haste, and ran and questioned the first person I met. I was told that the house was full of foreigners. "Foreigners ! and from what country ?"—"They are Austrians."—Austrians at Nazareth ! and in great numbers !—the thing appeared incredible to me. It was, nevertheless, true.

They were the officers of the frigate, La Guerrière, commanded by Commodore Baron Accourti, which had anchored at Caiffa. They had obtained permission to visit Nazareth, set out rather late, and performed the journey on pack-horses, which had rendered their progress slower and more fatiguing. As there was a great scarcity of beds, I hastened instantly to the superior, and begged him to dispose of mine ; I then went down to the refectory, where I found the gentlemen taking supper with an excellent appetite. My name was not unknown to them : one of them, indeed, was an officer with whom I had had frequent intercourse at Vienna. A conversation, the most frank and the most cordial, immediately commenced. As I had been some weeks at Nazareth, I paid them, in some measure, the attentions of a host, and offered them everything that I could command. Several proposed to go to Jerusalem, which they longed to see. I informed them that the plague was raging there, as well as in several other towns of Judea ; and they relinquished their design. I advised them to make themselves amends for this disappointment by an excursion into Galilee, which was well worthy of their notice, and could not fail to interest their curiosity. Though still ailing, I thought that I could not help promising to accompany them. They accepted my offer with joy. The party was arranged for the next day, and, meanwhile, we retired to take a few hours' rest.

Very early next morning, we went to the residence of M. Catafago, the Austrian vice-consul, to request him to procure for us the requisite number of horses ; and I set

out immediately, with the young baron Accourti, lieutenant of La Guerrière, M. de Kissinger, M. Catafago's eldest son, and some other officers belonging to the frigate. Our cavalcade, including janissaries and servants, consisted of about twenty-five persons.

We proceeded first to Mount Tabor, which it gave me real joy to see again. It was not lighted by so brilliant a day as it was at the time of my former visit: but though the weather was less favourable, still it permitted us to distinguish the places most worthy of remark. My companions were not less struck than myself with the beauty, the grandeur, of the scene that expanded itself to their view. Some, lifting their eyes to heaven, and fixing them steadfastly upon it, exclaimed, with a deeply religious feeling: "Thence it was that issued those divine words: 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!'" And I was not less moved than if I had heard the celestial voice uttering them. It seemed as if Jesus was in the midst of us. I said: "It is good to be here;" and these words rang in the recesses of my heart.

In descending, we took the road that leads to the Jordan. We were about six or seven leagues from that river. At noon, we halted under some trees of a mean-garden, to take a little refreshment, and to rest our horses. We then resumed our march, and soon found ourselves in an extremely fertile country. We met with none but Arabs, busily engaged in harvesting their crops, or gaily singing airs of their own country beside their camels.

It was four o'clock when, from the top of a hill which we were about to descend, we perceived in the plain the lake of Tiberias and the Jordan, which runs through without mingling with it, and proceeds, after long windings, to discharge itself into the Dead Sea.*

The lake presents one of the most imposing sights in the Holy Land. In the mind of every one at all acquainted with sacred history, it awakens recollections so

* According to some writers, the lake of Tiberias is not only fed but formed by the Jordan.

numerous and so grand, that the imagination is overpowered and deeply moved by them. But, independently of the wonderful events connected with this lake, it cannot fail to produce a strong impression by its natural beauty: it is, I may say, a miniature of the lake of Geneva; but a miniature the more precious, since the country is almost destitute of springs, and wells are very rare in it.

The descent leading to the Jordan is long and rapid. No sooner were we on the banks of the river, than every one was calling to mind the miracles which had rendered it celebrated. One mentioned Joshua passing through it, dry-shod, at the head of the people of God; another, Elijah and Elisha striking the waters with their cloaks, and thus opening themselves a way across; a third, the same Elisha bringing to the surface, by the power of his word, the head of the hatchet, dropped into the river by one of the sons of the prophets; but most, the preaching of John the Baptist, the baptism of our Saviour, the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Lamb of God, who hath taken away the sins of the world, &c. Each then thought of marking his visit to the river by some act, or taking with him some memorial of it. Some bathed in it; others filled bottles with its water; this picked up small pebbles; that, seated on a hillock, took out his pencil to draw a view. For my part, after quenching my thirst by a draught of the sacred water, I went to rest myself under an arch of a ruined bridge, near which Messrs. Accourti, Kissinger, Schultz, and the surgeon of the frigate, were bathing. There the Jordan is not deep, but rapid as in the rest of its course. Reflecting that, among all the pilgrims whom devotion brings thither every year, there is not one but deems it a sort of religious duty to plunge into the stream, I felt an irresistible desire to avail myself of this occasion, and, though still unwell, was preparing to strip and join those gentlemen, when I was prevented by the formal prohibition of the surgeon.

Several Arabs, mounted on camels, crossed from one bank to the other: I counted their steps. If I am not mistaken, it took about two hundred in this place, where

the Jordan appeared to me wider than anywhere else, except at its mouth. Six hundred paces beyond the ruins of the bridge where we were, it issues from the lake, and is then not more than forty or fifty feet broad at most. The water is excellent.

Among the incidents of our stay near the river, there is one which I should be sorry to omit relating to you. It has taught me one of the most useful lessons that one can receive in life—not to be too hasty in forming opinions, and, above all, not to hazard them upon mere appearances.

One of the officers who were with us was a man esteemed by all for his bravery. But, though in his conduct and his language he was as reserved as any of the other persons belonging to the frigate, yet, from certain airs, certain manners, I ventured secretly to infer that he was much more courageous than devout. I was near him at the moment when he was going to bathe. He committed to my care a small medallion, which he carried hanging about his neck, telling me that he valued it very highly. What was my surprise, on looking at it, to see an image of the Blessed Virgin, most admirably executed I asked him where that sweet, that lovely, portrait was painted. "At Venice," he replied; "and such is my attachment to it that a million piasters would not tempt me to part from it."—"A million piasters!" I repeated; "and yet methinks that sum would be a very strong temptation."—"No matter," replied he, with a wholly Christian vivacity, "no matter!"

Mounting our horses again, we proceeded towards the lake of Tiberias; we soon arrived at its banks, along which we rode for the space of three leagues.

This lake, to which the Hebrews gave the appellation of pond, or even sea, as they did to all bodies of water of any extent, was at first called lake of Gennereth, of Genesareth or Genesar, denominations which, though differing, designated but one and the same town, one and the same district, at the southern extremity. It was likewise called the sea of Galilee, because it was bordered on the north and east by that province. It did not assume the name of Tiberias, till Herod had caused that

town to be built, on the site, it is said, of Genesareth, in honour of Tiberius, on the elevation of that prince to the empire.

"The water of the lake of Genesareth," says Josephus, the historian, "is very good to drink, and very easy to get at, because its shore is composed of very fine gravel. It is so cold as not to lose its coldness, when the natives of the country, according to their custom, set it in the sun in order to warm it during the most intense heat of summer. It contains a quantity of different sorts of fish, which are not met with elsewhere.

"The country," he adds, "which surrounds the lake and bears the same name, is admirable for its beauty and fertility. There are no plants which Nature has not rendered it capable of growing, and the art and industry of the inhabitants have not failed to turn this advantage to good account. The air is so temperate that it is suited to all sorts of fruit: you there meet with abundance of walnut-trees, which affect very cold countries; and those which need more warmth, as the palm, and a mild and temperate air, as the fig and the olive, equally find there what they want; so that it seems as if Nature, by an effort of her love for this beautiful country, had delighted to bring together contrary things, and that all the seasons vie with one another in favouring this happy land. For it not only produces so many excellent fruits, but they keep there so long that you may eat grapes and figs for ten months, and other fruits the whole year round."*

Such was its condition at the time when Josephus wrote, that is, soon after Vespasian had defeated the Jews in a naval fight on this very lake. Since then, no country, perhaps, has undergone a greater change, in regard to what depends on the labour and industry of man. Nature, no doubt, is still the same: but the oppression under which the inhabitants live, and the absence of all cultivation, give it in several parts all the appearances of sterility.

The surrounding hills, now destitute of trees and verdure, still present points of view that are, it is true, very

* Josephus's "War of the Jews," book iii., c. 35.

fine, but dull and wild. Of the towns and villages, once so populous and flourishing, which embellished the shores of the lake, scarcely a few miserable ruins are now remaining.

You look on the west side for that Capernaum, of old so wealthy and so flourishing, which, for its prosperity, deserved a name, said by the interpreters to signify Land of Consolation or Joy—that Capernaum, which Jesus called *his town;* which he favoured in vain by so many and such great miracles: and the only traces that you find of its ancient splendour are rubbish, pieces of capitals, fragments of pillars. You feel that the wrath of God has passed over it, and that the anathema is accomplished: "And thou, Capernaum, which are exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for, if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day." (Matt. xi. 23.)

Gerasa, or Gergesa, peopled of old by Jews, Greeks, and Syrians, and destroyed by the troops of Vespasian: Mageddon, ruined also by the Romans; Bethsaida and Chorazin, cursed by our Saviour, now present nought but heaps of stones, or mean huts, inhabited by Arabs.

On the other side of the lake are still to be seen some grottoes, excavated in the rock. These were ancient tombs mentioned in Scripture. St. Mark says:—

"And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.

"And when he was come down out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the *tombs* a man with an unclean spirit;

"Who had his dwelling among the *tombs*, and no man could bind him, no, not with chains....

"And always night and day he was in the mountains, and in the *tombs*, crying, and cutting himself with stones." (Mark v. 1—5.)

This lake, though stripped, as I have just told you, of the towns, the villages, and the magnificent houses which embellished it two thousand years ago, and in spite of the nakedness of the hills which surround it, still wears, even at this day, a most delightful aspect. Bordered everywhere with rose-laurels, which droop their tufted

and flowery branches over the calm surface of its limpid waters, it exhibits the charming image of an immense mirror, having for its frame a garland of verdure and flowers.

The impression produced by this pleasing prospect was rapidly effaced from my mind by the recollections of the events of which these parts were the theatre. Here it was that the most bloody battle, and the most fatal to the Christian cause of any recorded in the annals of the East, was fought on the 2d of July, 1137. From the tops of these hills Saladin's troops poured with the impetuosity of a torrent upon the Christian army, drawn into the plain. There, after a fight of two whole days with the forces of the infidels, having to struggle with hunger, thirst, and all sorts of privations, that army was cut in pieces, and lost all the fruit of the numerous exploits which had till then maintained and secured its conquests. There it had to endure all sorts of calamities, all sorts of mortifications ; the sword, fire, the loss of the true cross, the slaughter of its most valiant leaders, the capture of its king ; and, if we may believe several contemporary chroniclers, to crown its misfortunes, it had to number among the principal causes of all these disasters the perfidy and treachery of one of its captains, on whose fidelity it had the greatest right to rely. "Those fields were strewed with the bodies of the Christians ; those furrows were drenched with their blood, which flowed there like rain, as Saladin himself says ; and their scattered limbs, their dried bones, were left nearly a year above ground unburied, attesting at once the triumph and the ferocity of the conqueror."

Following the shore, we arrived at Tiberias, which gave name to the battle that I have just been adverting to.

Walls flanked with towers, and washed by the waters of the lake, give it the appearance of a fortress ; but, as you approach, you soon perceive that those ramparts would not resist a cannon-shot. A soldier was sitting, all alone, at the gate of the town. We halted before the house of an acquaintance of M. Catafago's, and, having alighted, he, M. Aecourti and myself, went in.

I had a letter of recommendation for a young Arab: I directed a servant to go and deliver it immediately. Our attendants began to unsaddle our horses and to carry in our baggage, when the person to whom I was recommended came in. He asked for the master of the house; and, with an anxious look, and in a loud and animated voice, said a few words to him which I did not understand. I requested M. Catafago to explain them. "Why," said he, with the utmost composure, "the plague has made its appearance in the town: it has already carried off two persons. But," continued he, "don't be alarmed; we shall start again to morrow." —"Not alarmed!" I exclaimed; "and not start till to-morrow! No, no, we must be gone this very instant!"

Thereupon I went out to order the horses not to be put up. Our guides remonstrated; they told me that the poor beasts were quite jaded. I replied in such a manner as to show that I would be obeyed, and immediately went to acquaint the persons of our caravan with the danger that we had to apprehend. In a quarter of an hour we had passed out at the same gate by which we had entered.

No sooner were we outside than we held a council. It was decided that we should go about a cannon-shot farther, and rest ourselves in a recently cleared corn-field. On our arrival there I took the precaution to place the horses and the baggage quite close to us, and to post sentinels in such a manner as to prevent the approach of any person whatsoever from the town. As for the provisions and other articles, which necessity forced us to receive, we purified them carefully with water. It was agreed that, when the moon rose, which would be about midnight, we should pursue our journey.

As it was still broad daylight, we presently had numerous visiters. Our guards, adhering to their orders, took care to keep back, to the distance of eight or ten paces, all who came to our little camp. Among these were several Jews, who, to my extreme surprise, without having ever set foot in Germany, spoke German perfectly. It gave me real pleasure to chat with them a few

moments. I knew not that persons of their nation formed two-thirds of the population of Tiberias ; and that they had skilful masters, who taught them our language. According to their account, a great many of them are descended from families settled on the same spot, at the time of Jesus Christ. So much is certain, that their synagogue is considered as the first in the East ; and that their rabbis are reputed to be very learned. Foreign professors of their religion throng to their town, under the influence of the same feeling of devotion which impels so many to go to Jerusalem. Hither they repair from all parts of the world, with the intention of ending their days in this place. A tradition, generally accredited among them, declares that Christ will come from Capernaum to Tiberias : they are expecting him ; and I have been told that the most zealous of them post themselves, in turn, on an elevated spot, and there, keeping their eyes constantly fixed on the ruins of the town from which the Messiah is to come, they stand sentry, in order to be the first to proclaim his happy advent. Nay, in reference to this expectation, I have heard a story of a wag, who, having at night fastened a number of lamps to a crazy boat which happened to be upon the lake, at a considerable distance from the port, made it move towards the town, on which all the Jews set out to meet the "desired of the nations." The tumult was great, added my informant, and the joy still greater, till the moment when the illusion was dispelled by the sad reality.

We were in want of water : an Arab belonging to our retinue was sent to fetch some from the lake, which was not far from the spot where we were. Apprehensive lest he might commit some imprudence, I thought it right to follow him ; and well it was that I did so. He took care, it is true, to shun the approach of men ; but he quietly filled his skin, fifteen or twenty paces from the carcass of a horse, which, being above the level of the water, diffused around a most poisonous stench. I insisted that he should empty his skin immediately, and go two hundred paces higher to fill it again ; after which I escorted him back, watching him as closely as though he had been a prisoner.

On my return to the camp, I found supper ready. It was a frugal one, and seasoned by a good appetite. The boldest of us was glad that they had not uselessly defied the contagion. For my part, I congratulated myself the more for having occasioned our prompt departure; since it would have been most painful to me, if, in consequence of intercourse so difficult to be avoided in a town visited by the plague, the lives of the officers of the frigate, or those of the Fathers of the monastery to which I was returning, had been endangered. From all that I have had occasion to remark, there needs so little to propagate this terrible calamity, that it appears to me scarcely possible to escape it without absolute seclusion.

It was not, however, without regret that I found myself obliged to relinquish my intention of seeing Tiberias. I knew that Herod Agrippa had made it a large and handsome town; that, by means of immunities and privileges by grants of land and gifts of houses, he had fixed a great number of his Galilean subjects there, and drawn many foreigners to the town; and that of all this nothing was left but a paltry population of four thousand inhabitants and some scattered ruins.

But how much more should I have been gratified could I have visited these ruins; especially those of the buildings destined to commemorate some of the miraculous circumstances of the gospel history! and, could I but have seen the church of St. Peter, built by St. Helena,* on the site of the house, where the step-mother of that apostle was cured by Jesus Christ, and where he himself, according to tradition, had the happiness to behold the risen Saviour, I should have been satisfied.

Another disappointment, which I felt not less keenly, was to be prevented from executing a plan which I had formed on setting out, namely, to cross the lake at the same place and in the same direction as the vessel in which Jesus was with his disciples, when by his mighty word he stilled the waves, calmed the tempest, or sent

* Some writers give the honour of building this church to Tancred, king of Sicily and governor of Judea, under Godfrey. Others, and apparently with much more reason, assert that Tancred did no more than repair the edifice erected by St. Helena.

thousands of fishes into the nets of his apostles. The practice which I had made it, ever since my arrival in Palestine, to follow the steps of that divine Master; to go to the same places where I could say to myself that he had been; to follow the same paths, to pass the same streams, was one of my chief enjoyments. I felt that the prodigies of his infinite beneficence were thereby the more deeply engraven upon my soul; that my heart was the more touched, the more thoroughly penetrated, by them; that my thoughts, my affections, were rendered the more worthy of him: and here I lost an opportunity which, perhaps, might not occur again.

This painful idea, the disease, whose ravages I dreaded, the recollections of the day, and my sufferings, were more than enough to keep me awake: I could not sleep.

At midnight, as we had agreed, we resumed our journey. The first rays of the moon illumined the whole shore. From time to time I turned about, I stopped to look once more at the lake, the town, the environs, which were almost as distinctly visible as in broad day, and to which the moonlight gave a calmer, softer effect. I could scarcely take my eyes from them. Meanwhile the caravan pursued its way; it looked like a speck that is just vanishing in the distance; and I was obliged to disregard the difficulties of the road, and to rejoin it at a gallop.

In about two hours, we reached the desert place where Jesus miraculously fed the multitude that followed him.

"And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and his disciples to the multitude.

"And they did all eat and were filled, and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.

"And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children." (Matt. xiv. 19—21.)

We alighted to examine this spot more at leisure. Some carried away small stones from it as a memento.

We then turned off to the right, for the mountain of the *Beatitudes*. Such is the name given to a detached

and tolerably high hill, from the top of which Jesus delivered that admirable sermon to his apostles, in which he taught them, and in their persons all who would be his disciples, his divine doctrine on HAPPINESS; a doctrine till then unknown in the world, of which philosophy had no suspicion prior to its promulgation, which it has constantly rejected ever since; and the practice of which has, nevertheless, made from age to age the only happy persons that ever lived upon the earth.

The mountain of the Beatitudes is likewise called by some the mountain of Jesus Christ, because our Saviour frequently retired thither to pray; and also mountain of the apostles, because it was there that he selected those whom he thought fit to send forth to the nations to preach his Gospel.

On reaching the foot of this hill, we were stopped by the grass. It was so high that it nearly reached to our horses' heads, and so thick as to prevent all passage. Our janissaries were obliged to cut it down with their sabres, to open a way for us.

At length we reached the summit, though not without great difficulty. I fell on my knees, and, forgetting for a few moments those about me, I followed the dictates of those feelings which the place inspired, and which thronged into my heart—Here our Lord Jesus sat—there were his apostles—there his disciples—yonder the people who listened to him . . . . Yes, it was there that the Teacher of true wisdom said:—

"Blessed are the poor in spirit.

"Blessed are the meek.

"Blessed are they that mourn.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.

"Blessed are the merciful.

"Blessed are the peace-makers.

"Blessed are the pure in heart.

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake."

And it seemed as though he said to me individually:—

"Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you

falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad." (Matt. v. 1—12.)

And my joy was indeed great, I assure you, my dear friend; and the feeling of the presence of the divine Master and his disciples, on the same spot, so strong that I could not have been more deeply affected, had they left an undeniable testimony engraven by themselves upon the rock.

Returning to my travelling companions, who, on their part, had experienced impressions which they had not anticipated, I admired with them the beauty of the plain by which the hill is on all sides surrounded. We picked up a few splinters of the rock, to add them to the mementoes which we had elsewhere collected.

In descending, our janissaries, to shorten the way, made us take a path intersected by deep ravines, which obliged us to alight and to lead our horses by the bridle. We had reached the bottom at sunrise. Fiery clouds enveloped the summit that we had just quitted; and this mountain, where the mildest of masters had preached to his disciples the law of love, exhibited in some measure an image of that where, four thousand years before, had been given the law of fear, beneath a flaming sky, amidst thunder and lightnings.

The country which we were traversing was remarkable for its fertility; vegetation was everywhere active and luxuriant; the fields were covered by abundant crops.

At seven in the morning we entered Cana. The heat was already intense, and the fatigue overpowering We went and encamped in an orchard, containing a great number of fruit-trees, and among others, apricot-trees, from which our Arabs shook down the fruit and brought it to us. Weary and parched with thirst, I must confess that we ate it without scruple, recollecting that the apostles, when hungry, had not hesitated to pluck ears in a corn-field on the Sabbath-day.

Cana, about two leagues distant from Nazareth, is situated on the slope of a hill. It was anciently one of the prettiest towns in Galilee: now it is but a mean village, inhabited by poor Arabs. Most of the dwellings are mere huts. You perceive numerous ruins, some of which

we visited. But what I, for my part, was most anxious to see was, the place where Jesus, in performing his first miracle, "manifested forth his glory" in such a manner that his disciples believed on him." (John ii. 11.) We were presently conducted thither by persons whom we had not expected to have for guides.

We were at breakfast, when two schismatic Greek priests, hearing of our arrival, came to beg us to give them a bottle of wine for the service of their church, and invited us to see it. We gave them the wine and followed them. They first took us to their chapel, which is mean and dilapidated. There they showed us an enormous stone vase, and assured us, in the most serious manner, that it was one of those that contained the water which Christ changed into wine. I took care not to betray the least sign of incredulity. They then led us about fifty paces farther, to a building entirely open. To reach it, we were obliged to climb over prodigious heaps of stones, the ruins of walls overthrown either by time or by the hand of man. On the site of this building stood the house where was held the marriage, at which Jesus and his mother were present. St. Helena caused a very handsome church to be built there, over the porch of which were to be seen three water-pots in relievo. In the sequel, the Mahometans seized and converted it into a mosque. At present, one may say, no other traces of it are left but two small pillars, marking the spot where the miracle was wrought, and a kind of altar, at which it would still be possible to say mass. Everything in it is in a most deplorable state, or rather there is nothing but ruins piled upon ruins.

The soil in the environs of Cana is fertile; the inhabitants successfully cultivate fruit-trees, the vine, maize, and especially tobacco, the produce of which is abundant.

At some distance from the village is a fountain or a kind of well, wide, but not deep, to which you descend by two flights of steps. The water is very clear and good. Hence was brought that which Jesus changed into wine. A clump of olive trees planted near it affords an agreeable shade to the weary traveller, and contributes

to give a picturesque appearance to this fountain. At the moment we were passing, it was surrounded by women, who were washing clothes there; numerous cattle were approaching to quench their thirst. We could not help remarking with pain the most extraordinary contrast between the fertility of the country, those fine cattle, those rich crops, those excellent fruits, and the wretched state of the inhabitants. The faces and the garments of most of them betray the stamp of indigence.

The road by which we returned to Nazareth is very bad, leading over hills whose declivities are rugged and dangerous, and through difficult and stony defiles. We arrived thoroughly tired; the first thing we did was to take some rest, of which we had the greatest need.

Next day my travelling companions returned to the frigate. My state of suffering had interested them; they had shown me such civilities, such attentions, that I could not sufficiently express my gratitude. I saw them set out with deep regret; my most sincere good wishes accompanied them.

The community was not a little alarmed on learning the deplorable cause which had determined us to leave Tiberias without taking a single hour to look at the place. As it is customary to make a pilgrimage thither every year on St. Peter's day, and that festival was approaching, the Fathers had already begun to think of preparing for the journey. After my report, it was deemed prudent to send a messenger to obtain further information concerning the state of the town. Fifteen persons had died since our departure, and the disease did not appear likely to abate. The danger was judged serious, and the Fathers would not expose themselves to it. How did I then applaud myself for not hazarding a stay which might have compromised the lives of the brave men belonging to his Imperial Majesty's frigate, and for having instigated the adoption of those precautions which had preserved us!

June 27.

The plague has made its appearance in the house of a Greek Catholic; yesterday our Fathers were informed

of it, and the monastery was immediately closed. Here I am a prisoner? all my plans, all my projects, are disconcerted. May I hope to see the places that I have yet to visit? I cannot tell: and, for this painful and continual uncertainty, I can comfort myself only by recurring incessantly to the special motto of the Order to which I have the happiness to belong: THE HOLY WILL OF GOD. At any rate, it is not probable that I shall be able to get away while the disease rages; and, if I could, what security would there be for the continuance of my excursions, and who would consent to be my guide!

To the melancholy circumstances in which I find myself, you will be indebted for a few words concerning the precautions adopted here by our good Fathers in time of plague.

In every monastery in Palestine, the minister (*curé*) of the place habitually resides. This is always a Franciscan missionary, sufficiently acquainted with the Arabic language to perform, with benefit, the functions of his sacred calling. As soon as the plague breaks out, he goes to lodge out of the convent, that he may be more handy for those who may need his assistance. He visits them, consoles them, cheers them, encourages them by the sublime considerations of religion; he procures for them all the bodily comforts that are in his power; he administers the sacraments to them, taking care to avoid all contact that might communicate the disease to himself or render him liable to commuicate it to others. To administer the consecrated bread at the Lord's Supper, he uses a pair of silver tongs, extremely slender, and half a yard long. He is, moreover, provided, as much as possible, with the principal preservatives which medical science has yet discovered. It is, nevertheless, no uncommon thing that, in spite of all these precautions, he falls a victim to his zeal, as the minister of Bethlehem has just done.

It is usually in winter that the plague appears. It extends its ravages in the spring, and considerably abates at the time of the great heats, that is, about the beginning of June. Most of those who are then attacked by

it recover. St. John's day is considered as the term when the scourge ceases altogether; but this, as you perceive, is not a strict and absolute truth.

The most important precautions for securing yourself against it, when you are residing in an infected district, and you cannot leave it, are, to shut yourself up; not to take in any provisions or other articles but such as the plague has no action upon; and, above all, to destroy the cats, and to prevent them, by all means, from getting into the house. This severity is the more necessary, inasmuch as the disease has no more rapid vehicle than those animals.

LETTER XL.

Journey to Naim—Aged Arab—Sheik of Naim—Village of Sephoris—Bethulia—Departure from Nazareth—Caiffa—Monastery of Mount Carmel—The Melon Garden—Wild Beasts on the Carmel—St. Jean d'Acre—Djezzar-Pacha; his Cruelty—Ibrahim Pacha.

Mount Carmel, July 9, 1832.

It is but a few days since I wrote to you, my dear friend, from Nazareth, under the apprehension of being detained there for a long time, and here I am at Mount Carmel. Forty-eight hours after the monastery in which I was a prisoner had been closed, an unexpected incident opened its doors for me. Some officers belonging to an English frigate, lying at Caiffa, arrived on the 29th at the convent, and solicited permission to see it. At first, the Fathers hesitated; but, as the plague had carried off but one person since it appeared, and the first alarm had subsided, they thought it right to admit those gentlemen. I availed myself of this circumstance to leave the house and visit Naim. The reverend Father Gaudenzio Betti, of Pistoia, minister of Nazareth, feeling no apprehension of the progress of the contagion, resolved to accompany me. I was informed that the Bedouins, furious at the reduction of St. Jean d'Acre, infested the environs, and that it would be dangerous to travel without escort: I, therefore, took four Turkish

horsemen, armed at all points, and we set out at two in the morning.

The road leading to the plain of Esdrelon, at the extremity of which Naim is situated, is winding and very bad. I was foremost, and in the dark, purblind as I am besides, I had great difficulty to keep the track. All at once I heard a dull sound. I called one of the guides, but received no answer. I called a second time; the same silence prevailed. I continued, nevertheless, to advance. Presently, cries and confused words in the Arabic language reached my ear; and I deemed it prudent to proceed, sword in hand .... I had no need for my courage: it was merely a file of camels, which the drivers were taking towards Nazareth. It was so extremely dark that I did not perceive them till my horse, coming in an opposite direction, had like to have run against the leader of the file. Meanwhile, the good minister and our four horsemen had overtaken me.

At daybreak, we entered the extensive plain of Esdrelon. We were approaching mount Hermon, when we perceived on a little hill a small wretched village, consisting of a few huts built of loose stones, but surrounded by numerous ruins, indicating that formerly there must have been a considerable town on that spot. Our people could not tell us its name.

Farther on, we came to a well, at which some hideous Arab women, dressed in rags, with skeleton arms, were drawing up, with toil, buckets of muddy water, and giving to cattle as lean and ill-favored as themselves.

Three hundred paces from this well, on the right, and at the foot of the mountain, are seen some mean habitations, irregularly built around heaps of stones; this is Naim. Part of these stones are said to have belonged to an old church. Not far off is a ditch, bordered by a wall of ruins, near which are two small mutilated marble pillars. It was there that, according to tradition, Jesus, having stopped those who were carrying the corpse of a widow's son to be interred out of the town, agreeably to the practice of the Jews, raised him from the dead, and restored him alive to his mother. On our arrival there, we knelt down, and the venerable *curé*, dressed in his stole, read

with a loud and firm voice, though deeply moved, the following passage of the gospel, to which I listened in religious silence :—

"And it came to pass the day after that he went into a city called Naim, and many of his disciples went with him, and much people.

"Now, when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow : and much people of the city was with her.

"And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

"And he came and touched the bier, and they that bare him stood still, and he said, Young man, I say unto thee, arise.

"And he that was dead sat up and began to speak: and he delivered him to his mother.

"And there came a fear on all, and they glorified God, saying, A great prophet hath risen up among us, and God hath visited his people.

"And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about." (Luke vii. 11—17.)

We were still on our knees, when we were observed by an aged Arab, whose long white beard flowed over a bosom embrowned by the sun. He accosted the *curé*, who was well acquainted with the language of the country, and, while speaking to him in a very animated tone, he sometimes lifted his eyes to heaven, sometimes cast them down upon the spot on which we were ; and, by the expression of his countenance, as well as by the vehemence of his gestures, he manifested a painful feeling, the cause of which I was unable to guess. The good *curé*, in his turn, raised his eyes to heaven, heaved sighs of grief, and replied in words not less unintelligible to me than those of the old man. When this dialogue was over, I requested Father Gaudenzio to favour me with an explanation of what the Arab had said to him. "That old man," he replied, "is deeply affected to see these ruins. 'Christian,' said he to me, 'thou appearest, as well as thy companion, to have a sincere respect for the

place where thou art kneeling. I have often seen other pilgrims come hither, like thee, to pray; how happens it, then, that thou and they leave it in such a wretched state, since it is held in such veneration by you all, especially by you Franks, who come hither to worship your God?'"

The good Father had endeavoured to explain to him, in the most moderate terms, how, under a government such as that which oppresses Palestine, under rulers so jealous, so unjust, and so cruel, the Christians are obliged to suffer all the monuments of their religion to fall into decay and ruin. This was, alas! but too true. To obtain permission to repair the most insignificant wall, you must descend to the most humiliating prayers and solicitations; nay, more, you must even pay to be authorized to solicit! The proceedings are continued for whole years, and most frequently terminate in nothing definite. unless it be a refusal, which has cost enormous sums.

Meanwhile, we began to feel the necessity for taking some refreshment. We went behind a rock to screen ourselves from the heat of the sun, and there, seated on the ground, began to spread out our provisions, when the sheik of the place arrived. He had arrayed himself in his best. I asked him for some barley and straw for our horses—scarce articles at that time. They were presently brought to us. I requested to be informed what I owed him. "I am sufficiently paid," replied he, with all the urbanity of the most polished European, "by the pleasure of having obliged you." Nor did he stop there: he had brought with him two other inhabitants; he sat down with them about ten paces from us, ordered them to make coffee, and insisted on handing it himself to us and the persons of our escort. The latter seated themselves by his side, and smoked along with him.

Such kind and hospitable behaviour touched without surprising me. I had already had occasion to remark it, as I think I have observed to you.

At the moment of parting, I thanked the sheik. I testified my gratitude in such a manner that I had no reason to regret having proved myself less generous than

he ; and, having taken a last look at Naim, I set out on my return to Nazareth.

Scarcely had we proceeded a few steps, when we heard the report of a musket behind us. One of our men was missing. Perhaps he had been attacked by some Bedouins in ambush ! I galloped towards the point from which the sound proceeded, and there found our man battling with an enormous snake, at which he had fired his piece. The monstrous reptile, spotted with blue and white, furiously erected his head. We pursued it ; but it got among the bushes and escaped.

Almost immediately after our return, symptoms of the plague, doubtful, it is true, had again appeared among the family of the person whom it had shortly before carried off. I was fearful that the monastery would be again closed ; and under this apprehension, I at first thought of fixing the 3d of July for my departure for the Carmel ; but a wish to see Sephoris, the birth-place of St. Anna, the mother of the Virgin Mary, made me change my resolution. The venerable Father Gaudenzio, whose society had been so delightful to me, and to whom I was indebted for the explanation of the remarkable words of the old Arab, had the kindness to accompany me on this occasion.

The distance from Nazareth to Sephoris is but two leagues. The road is better than most of those that I have yet travelled. We were well mounted, and arrived in less than two hours.

Sephoris is built on the declivity of a hill which overlooks the plain of Zebulon, one of the most fertile and most abundant in pasturage that I have seen in the Holy Land. According to the account of Josephus, the historian, it was in ancient times "the largest town in Galilee, the strongest from its situation, and the principal defence of the country." Herod Antipas, the tetrarch, resided there with his whole court. At the time of the war of the Jews, it sided against its own nation, and received a Roman garrison. It has the glory of having been the birth-place of St. Joachim and St. Anna, the parents of the Blessed Virgin. At present it is but a village, more considerable, it is true, and less poor, than

the villages of Palestine in general are. We discovered no other traces of its original ramparts than rubbish, which is said to be the remains of a castle. Farther off, and outside the modern village, on the site of the house in which Joachim and Anna dwelt, St. Helena caused a church to be built: its ruins, in tolerable preservation, still attest the magnificence of this edifice. The Franciscan Fathers go thither once a year to say mass. To pay more particular honour to the parents of the holy mother of our Saviour, I made a point of entering this church with a torch in my hand, as I had done when visiting the principal sanctuaries. We tarried there a short time to pray, not without experiencing those deep, tender, and soothing emotions, which the places consecrated by the presence of Jesus and his saints never fail to excite.

I should have liked, before I returned, to take a nearer view of Bethulia, so celebrated for the siege which it sustained from the army of Holofernes, general of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Assyria; and still more for the miracle of his deliverance through the intrepidity of the courageous Judith. I was curious to examine the ruins still discoverable, it is said, of the canals which conveyed the water of the neighbouring springs to the inhabitants, and which were cut by Holofernes; that, by depriving them of it, he might force them to surrender the sooner: but it was too late to go on thither, and to return the same day to Nazareth. To my regret, I could do no more than look at Bethulia from the heights of Sephoris, whence it is perceived on the side of a lofty hill, extending to the north-west. According to the account of my worthy companion, it is now a considerable and tolerably populous village.

The day after my excursion to Sephoris, I made preparations for my final departure. I resolved to take another look at the places in Nazareth which I had visited, and to bid them a last farewell; but it was with a sad heart, oppressed with grief at the idea of quitting them. I have already told you that the thought of being in the town where Jesus, Mary, and Joseph had long dwelt, made me quite happy: the idea of leaving it forever was so much

the more painful and bitter: it seemed as though I was parting from the holy family itself.

At one the next morning I heard mass at the altar of the Annunciation, and received the holy communion. At two o'clock I entered the sacred grotto, where I passed some time in prayer.

At half-past three I was on the road to Carmel. A janissary on horseback, two men on foot, well armed, and a guide, composed my escort. A camel carried my baggage.

The distance from Nazareth to Carmel is about eight leagues. The road bad, like all those of Palestine, is bordered, as it were, with rocks, between which, at intervals, there are plains whose soil is fertile but very ill cultivated. It runs through a wood that is reputed dangerous: when we approached it, my people appeared uneasy. We passed through it without molestation.

On my arrival at Caiffa, the Egyptian troops were employed in repairing the fortifications. I rode through the midst of a great number of soldiers, tents, and pieces of artillery.

The town is filthy and ill-built. Some assert that it derives its name from its rocks, which, according to the interpreters, are called in Syriac, *Cepha*; others say that it is named after the chief priest, Caiaphas, who, they add, was the lord of this place. At the time of the Crusades, it fell into the hands of the French, who fortified it, and long maintained themselves there against the incursions of the Saracens. The latter, having taken it in the sequel, laid it in ruins, and reduced it to the wretched plight in which it appears at this day.

I had still a league to travel before I should reach the end of my journey. My camel driver, who, till then had been willing and obliging, told me plumply that he could not take my baggage any farther. Offer what I would, I could not conquer his obstinacy; I was obliged to continue my route, and to leave everything valuable that I possessed behind me at Caiffa.

At length I arrived at the monastery of Mount Carmel. I was welcomed with Christian charity and kindness by the superior and his monks, only three in num-

ber. They insisted on my occupying the room of the divan, which, after repeated refusals, I was obliged to accept, at the urgent desire of the good Fathers.

About twelve years ago, during the war between the Greeks and the Porte, Abdallah Pacha completely demolished this monastery and church, upon the vain and ridiculous pretext that the Greeks might get possession and make a fortress of it. The Grand Signor, sensible of the extreme infamy of such conduct, issued a firman, enjoining the pacha to rebuild the monastery at his own expense; but Abdallah took no notice of this order. The Carmelite Fathers, who had anticipated this disobedience, resolved to make a collection in Europe; and, with the resources thus obtained, they fell to work. The buildings, begun on a handsome plan, are already half completed. The church is very beautiful. As, unfortunately, the materials, and even water, can only be conveyed thither on the backs of asses or camels, the expenses are enormous; the funds are nearly exhausted; and, with the indifference of the Catholics of the west, it is easy to foresee that the edifice will not very soon be finished. It is, however, sufficiently advanced in the part where I am, to afford a comfortable lodging.

The word Carmel is variously explained by the interpreters: according to some, it signifies *circumcised lamb;* according to others, *field that is cut or harvested;* others again translate it, *vine of God or of the Lord.*

Under this name is in general comprised a chain of hills extending for the space of about seven leagues from north-east to south-west, the top of which is a spacious rocky plain, five leagues broad, in ancient times covered with vines, and now with wood, which serves for a retreat to panthers and other ferocious animals. I am assured that the circumference of this chain, at its base, is about seventy miles, or twenty-three leagues.

The name of Carmel is given more especially to the hill nearest to Caiffa, on the summit of which stand the monastery where I am, and the church which is dedicated to St. Elijah. On this hill the prophet dwelt for a long time. It was here that he assembled the people of Israel

and caused the prophets of Baal to be put to death. In the church is still to be seen the cave where he secreted himself to avoid the persecutions of Ahab and Jezebel. It is about fifteen feet long and twelve broad. It served the saint for dwelling and oratory. Here he obtained by his prayers abundant rains, which, after three years' drought, put an end to the distress that prevailed in the country. Over the cave stands a chapel, which is considered the most ancient of all those that have been erected in honour of the blessed Virgin. It is called Our Lady of Mount Carmel. According to tradition, it dates from the year 83 of Christ.

A few paces higher is the grotto of Elisha, the disciple of Elijah: it is hewn out of the rock, and there is a cistern close to it. To this place it was, according to tradition, that the Shunamite came to implore the prophet to raise her son from the dead.

At the foot of the hill is a cavern, twenty feet long, eighteen wide, and twelve high. A cistern and some trees, by which it is shaded, render it a very agreeable spot; but the access to it is difficult and dangerous. It is called the Grotto of the Sons of the Prophets. Here, it is said, the prophet Elijah received the chiefs of the people. It is now inhabited by a santon.

About a league farther is a piece of ground, called the Melon Garden, because you there meet with stones so closely resembling that fruit, in shape and appearance, that you would take them for petrified melons. It is said that the prophet Elijah, as he was passing this ground, being pressed by thirst, requested the gardener to give him a melon to refresh him. The man refused, though his garden was covered with that fruit; and, adding railery to refusal, "What you see," said he, "what you take for melons, are nothing but stones." Whereupon the man of God cursed the garden; and thenceforth it has produced nothing but stone melons. Travellers, either out of curiosity or devotion, have carried several away with them to their own country. The fact is certain; as for the cause, think what you please about it.

Among the illustrious personages who have visited Carmel, is mentioned, among others, St. Louis, who

made a pilgrimage to it about the middle of the thirteenth century; and Jeanne de Dreux, consort of Philip the Long, whose piety carried her thither ninety years afterwards.

In this account of Carmel, my dear friend, I have made a point of confining myself to the religious recollections which it awakens. If you wish to know what profane history says of it, you will find in Tacitus, Pliny, and Strabo, some particulars which may interest you, but which neither time nor my position permit me to collect.

I mentioned just now the wild beasts by which the Carmel is haunted. Listen to an adventure that lately befel a servant of the convent. The poor fellow cannot yet relate it without shuddering; and my story will probably make you shudder too.

The officers of the Austrian frigate, whom I so unexpectedly fell in with at Nazareth, came also to see the Carmel. On leaving, they begged this servant to show them a path that would lead them to their boat. Having done so, he was quietly returning to the convent, when all at once he saw a prodigious panther darting towards him. At sight of the formidable animal, his limbs quivered, and he found himself utterly powerless to stir a step. In the twinkling of an eye, the panther came up to him, and, playing with him as a cat does with a mouse which she has caught, she placed herself successively in different postures, varied her paces, and strove to touch him with her foot as if to teaze him: then, suddenly retiring a few paces, she made a spring at him. Trembling and aghast, the unhappy man recommended himself to God. He knew, from the horrid fate which other unfortunate persons had undergone in similar circumstances, how this terrible sport must end: he believed that his last moment was come. But, at that very moment, both man and beast heard a noise: it was a mounted Arab, armed with a gun, who was passing that way. Alarmed in her turn, the panther fled at the instant, when, helpless and incapable of the least exertion, he, whom she detained prisoner, was about to become her victim. He returned to the monastery, thanking heaven,

in the warmest effusions of gratitude, for having miraculously delivered him from such imminent danger.

From the room which I occupy, I enjoy an extensive and magnificent prospect. ' On the left, my eye wanders over the sea ; on the right it is struck by the aspect of hills, lifting their enormous rocks into the air ; some naked, others covered with wood. At the foot of Carmel, I see Caiffa and its harbour ; three leagues distant, where the coast is scooped out in the form of a basin, St. Jean d'Acre, or, more properly speaking, the ruins of that town, demolished by a shower of balls and bombs which lasted for seven months. Yesterday evening, I paused to contemplate that theatre of a violent and furious war, on which the moon threw her pale light ; and, with my eyes fixed on the ruins, I said to myself: "Yonder, then, it lies demolished—that strong-hold of despotism, where, for so many years, tyrants have sported with the lives of men ; that fortress, where, while the garrison was so valiantly defending the ramparts, the last Abdallah Pacha, without energy, without courage, kept himself ignominiously concealed in his harem, waiting till, after he had lost all, an order from Ibrahim should bid him go with a white handkerchief round his neck to throw himself at the feet of the conqueror and receive permission to live!" And I admired the dispensations of Providence in regard to these two men—of that Providence, "which," to use the language of Bossuet, "without authorizing rebellions, permits them, and punishes crimes by other crimes, which, ever terrible, and ever just, it chastises also in its own good time."*

You may well imagine, my dear friend, that, within sight of St. Jean d'Acre, it is not possible to avoid recollecting that the flames which raged in these later times in Europe extended to the East—to the very walls, whose sad ruins I can discern from my window. Accordingly, how many times have my thoughts been directed to the conqueror who was commissioned by heaven to chastise the Christian world ; but who, the moment he set foot in Asia, was suddenly stopped here

* *Politique sacrée*, 4to., p. 372.

by the Power superior to all powers, by that which says to all those whom it employs as its instruments: "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther!" and which is always obeyed. How often, in particular, has my soul thrilled with horror at the recollection of that Djezzar Pacha, whose cruelties equalled those of the most execrable tyrants, and who has retained the odious surname of *Butcher*, which he boasted of having given to himself!

In this country the name of Djezzar is not uttered without deep abhorrence, without a shudder. You would say that those who speak of him still hear the shrieks of the victims whom he sacrificed to his thirst of blood; and that the groans of his servants, of his women, in the agonies of death, inflicted by the hand of that executioner, are still ringing in their ears: you would say that they have still before their eyes the heaps of human limbs which he took delight in mangling, which he piled up, yet palpitating, to feast himself afterwards on the disgusting sight!

And yet—would you believe it, my friend?—some traits which would do honour to the prince most devoted to the interests of justice escaped that monster in the course of his life. Here is one, which, from its singularity, deserves relating.

A young Christian, carrying on business at St. Jean d'Acre, had won the good graces of Djezzar by the dealings which he had had with him, when selling to him various European commodities. He lived in a handsome house with his father, an aged and infirm man. The latter occupied the best and most convenient apartment on the second floor. The young man, who was about to marry, requested his father to give up his room to him for a few weeks only, protesting that he would then restore it with many thanks. The old man complied, and, going down to the first floor, though it was disagreeable and unwholesome, he settled himself in it.

At the expiration of the time specified, he claimed his room; the young couple begged him to wait: he consented, and allowed a further term. At the end of it he again urged his claim. But this time, the ungrateful

son, unmindful of what he owed to his parent, insolently declared that he intended to stay where he was; and desired that he might not be troubled any more on the subject. The unfortunate father bore the injury in silence. But, as his compliance with the wishes of his son, and the restriction which he had attached to it were known, the unworthy conduct of the young man soon became public.

Djezzar, by means of his numerous spies, knew all that passed; being informed of this circumstance, he sent for the son. The young man, relying on a good-will of which he had previously received habitual testimonies, hastened to the pacha, without hesitation and without fear. He found him in his divan, surrounded by his ministers and his executioners, and very soon perceived that he had incurred his displeasure.

"Of what religion art thou?" cried Djezzar, darting at him a look which made him turn pale with fear, and deprived him of the power to reply.

"I ask," he resumed, raising his voice, "of what religion thou art."

"I . . . I am a Christian, as your excellency knows."

"A Christian! Thou liest! Let us see! Make the sign of the Christians."

The young man trembling, made the sign of the cross.

"That is not it," said the pacha, clapping his hand upon his dagger: "pronounce aloud," continued he, "pronounce aloud the words which accompany that sign."

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," said the terrified Christian.

"Repeat them," said the pacha, "and speak louder; I am old and growing deaf."

The young man lifted his right hand to his forehead, and repeated in as loud a voice as he could: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

"Aha!" cried Djezzar, in a voice that made the divan shake, and thrilled the young man with horror. "Aha! wretch! the Father is on the forehead, the Son on the

breast! . . . . Knowest thou what that means? The Father is above, and the Son below. Go, scoundrel! go home, and if in a quarter of an hour it is not so there, thy head shall roll in the dust"

I need not say what haste the culprit made to throw himself at the feet of his father, to beg his pardon, and to give up the room which he had dared to withhold from him so unjustly.

Perhaps, my friend, you will be astonished that, when so near Acre, I have not determined to go thither. Before my departure from Carmel, I was advised to go and see the ruins of the place, and to pay a visit to Ibrahim. I have thought it right not to follow that advice. What should I have seen in the town? that which I have seen sufficiently at a distance: and in the conqueror of Abdallah? a brave man, no doubt, but a rebellious subject. Now, I neither like, nor I can endure, rebels or rebellions.

LETTER XLI.

Departure from Mount Carmel—Sour or Tyre—Saida or Sidon—Beyrout—M. Laurella, Austrian Vice-Consul—Mount Lebanon.

Beyrout, July 13, 1832.

On Friday evening, my dear Charles, I embarked in a Turkish vessel for the town from which I am writing to you. I intended to visit Tyre and Sidon by the way, and I agreed in consequence with the captain that I should land wherever I pleased.

No sooner had we sailed than I found myself sick, as I always am at sea, but worse this time than I ever was before on the water. For a great part of the night, the wind was contrary; nevertheless, by eleven in the forenoon, we were off Tyre, now better known by the name of Sour. We stopped there some hours.

Respecting the antiquity of this town, historians differ. Some date back its origin as far as Tyras, the grandson of Japhet, from whom, they say, it derives its name. Others, grounding their opinion on a passage in Isaiah, who calls it the "daughter of Sidon," which, in the lan-

guage of Scripture, signifies that Tyre was a colony of the latter, suppose it to have been founded several centuries later. Appealing to the testimony of Josephus, they assert that it is only 240 years anterior to the temple of Solomon, that is to say, that it dates from the year of the world 2760. Some maintain that there were two Tyres: the one much more ancient, and built on the continent near the coast; the other, more modern, standing on an island opposite to the former, from which it is separated only by an arm of the sea. You will assuredly not expect that a simple pilgrim, who humbly visits these parts from a very different motive than that of a profane science and erudition, should involve himself in questions which have occupied and perplexed the ablest scholars. I leave the solution of them to the learned.

Be the origin of Tyre what it may, all histories, all monuments, agree in representing it as one of the most celebrated, powerful, and flourishing cities that existed in the ancient world. Mistress of the sea; the centre of the commerce of the world; drawing from all countries to her markets whatever could enrich her by the sale or the exchange of the commodities which contribute most to the luxury, the vanity, the delight, or the convenience of life: having become necessary or formidable to all nations; treating them as an insolent ruler treats those whom he has subjected to his power; carrying on a shameful traffic in the fortunes and lives, not only of her enemies, but even of her allies; insulting Jerusalem in her misfortunes; pushing her impiety so far as to strip her and her temple of their richest treasures, to offer them to the infamous deities whom she worshipped—she deserved that heaven should at length hurl upon her the threats of its wrath.

Before the ruins of haughty Tyre, I opened Ezekiel, and there I read:—

"Because that Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, Aha! she is broken that was the gates of the people; she is turned unto me; I shall be replenished now she is laid waste:

"Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to

come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up.

"And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock.

"It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God, and it shall become a spoil to the nations.

"And her daughters which are in the field shall be slain by the sword, and they shall know that I am the Lord.

"For thus saith the Lord God, I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people.

"He shall slay with the sword thy daughters in the field, and he shall make a fort against thee, and cast a mount against thee, and lift up the buckler against thee.

"And he shall set engines of war against thy walls and with his axes he shall break down thy towers.

"By reason of the abundance of his horses, their dust shall cover thee; thy walls shall shake at the noise of the horsemen, and of the wheels, and of the chariots, when he shall enter into thy gates, as men enter into a city wherein is made a breach.

"With the hoofs of his horses shall he tread down all thy streets; he shall slay thy people by the sword, and thy strong garrisons shall go down to the ground.

"And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandize, and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses, and they shall lay thy stones, and thy timber, and thy dust, in the midst of the water

"And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease, and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard.

"And I will make thee like the top of a rock; thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon: thou shalt be built no more . . . . .

"Thus saith the Lord God to Tyrus, Shall not the isles shake at the sound of thy fall, when the wounded cry, when the slaughter is made in the midst of thee?

"Then all the princes of the sea shall come down from their thrones, and lay away their robes, and put off their broidered garments: they shall clothe themselves with trembling, they shall sit upon the ground, and shall tremble at every moment, and be astonished at thee.

"And they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and say to thee, How art thou destroyed that wast inhabited of seafaring men, the renowned city which was strong in the sea, she and her inhabitants, which cause their terror to be on all that haunt it?" (Ezekiel xxvi.)

And, after reading these terrible words of Him who never threatens in vain, I meditated for a few moments, my soul filled with awe, in the presence of the ruins which were before my eyes; on that long siege, at the conclusion of which, Nebuchadnezzar, the instrument of the divine vengeance, reduced to ashes the infatuated city which had dared to set itself up against the Most High.

And my thoughts then turned with pain to succeeding ages, when, having again become great, wealthy, powerful, corrupted by pride, and continuing to place her reliance on the false props of her prosperity, she forgot as well the chastisement which she had suffered as the crimes which had drawn it upon her.

And I opened Isaiah, and there I read:—

"The burden of Tyre. Howl ye ships of Tarshish, for it is laid waste, so that there is no house, no entering in: from the land of Chittim it is revealed to them.

"Be still ye inhabitants of the isle; thou whom the merchants of Zidon that pass over the sea have replenished.

"And by great waters the seed of Sihor, the harvest of the river, is her revenue, and she is a mart of nations.

"Be thou ashamed, O Zidon, for the sea hath spoken, even the strength of the sea, saying, I travail not nor bring forth children, neither do I nourish up young men nor bring up virgins.

"As at the report concerning Egypt, so shall they be sorely pained at the report of Tyre.

"Pass ye over to Tarshish, howl ye inhabitants of the isle.

"Is this your joyous city, whose antiquity is of ancient days? her own feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn.

"Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth?

"The Lord of hosts hath proposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth . . . . .

"He stretched out his hand over the sea, he shook the kingdoms: the Lord hath given a commandment against the merchant city to destroy the strongholds thereof;

"And he said, Thou shalt no more rejoice, O thou oppressed virgin, daughter of Zidon: arise, pass over to Chittim, there also thou shalt have no rest.

"Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for your strength is laid waste." (Isaiah xxiii.)

And I adored the awful decrees of Providence against guilty towns and empires, while calling to mind by what a series of events almost incredible, and yet attested by all histories, this second denunciation was fulfilled. Four hundred years after the terrible punishment inflicted by Nebuchadnezzar on the pride of Tyre, Alexander came hither, in his turn, to accomplish the predictions of Isaiah against that city, which had again begun to lift herself up above the nations and above God himself: and notwithstanding the silver, which, to use the words of Scripture, she had "heaped up, like dust;" notwithstanding "the gold which she had gathered together like the mud of the public places;" notwithstanding the height and the strength of her ramparts, behind which she deemed herself inexpugnable; notwithstanding the "girdle" of waters which encompassed her; notwithstanding the violence of the winds, the storms, and the waves, which were as favourable to her as they were adverse to her enemies; notwithstanding the innumerable multitude of the ships which gave her the dominion of the seas; notwithstanding her skill in working and navigating them; notwithstanding the valour of her warriors; notwithstanding all the efforts of courage and all the stratagems of cunning; notwithstanding all

the animosity and fury that despair can inspire—she sunk under the stroke of a foe who had on his side neither silver nor gold, nor ramparts, nor waters, nor winds, nor tempests, nor seamen, nor skill in naval warfare ; and who himself and his heroes, had nought wherewith to fight, save that force of will, that intelligence, and that long and persevering patience, with which God always endows those whom he chooses to execute his vengeance.

At the present day, the only remains left upon the ashes of Tyre are a few heaps of stones, covered with grass and gravel, and some mean scattered houses, the inhabitants of which, Christians and Turks, all poor, subsist chiefly by fishing. The only monument to be seen is a granite pillar, among the ruins scarcely to be recognised of an ancient church, in which it is believed that Origen was buried. Though I have read the contrary in geographers of repute, there exists not the least vestige of the famous dyke by which Alexander united the island with the continent.

A stone is pointed out near Tyre as that on which our Saviour is said to have sat to preach to the Tyrians ; and it is added that this is the place where a pious woman exclaimed in a transport of admiration: "Blessed is the womb that bare thee !"

I arrived in the evening at Saida, the ancient Sidon ; and, as the next day was Sunday, I stayed there till sunset. I lodged with the Franciscan Father who performs the functions of *curé*, and who occupies a spacious building belonging to the Fathers of the Holy Land.

Sidon, one of the most ancient cities in the world, was the capital of Phœnicia. It derived its name from Sidon, the eldest son of Canaan, who was its founder. So early as the time of Moses, it was celebrated and powerful, through its commerce and industry. Its inhabitants are supposed to have been the first navigators: they extended their dominion over the neighbouring countries, and established various colonies, the most famous of which were Tyre and Carthage. To them are attributed the discovery of the process for making glass, and the invention of several useful arts, carpentry, cabinet-making, stone-cutting, carving in wood, &c. Some of their workmen were invited to Jerusalem by Solomon, and wrought at the

construction of the Temple. In the time of Jesus Christ, this city had lost almost all its ancient splendour and great part of its population, in consequence of the numerous revolutions which it had undergone. It had the happiness to embrace the faith and to be visited by the Apostle Paul. It is believed also to have been the retreat of St. Peter, on his deliverance from prison; but this opinion is less certain, and is founded on tradition alone.

The new town is built on part of the ruins of the ancient city. When viewed from the sea, it makes a very handsome appearance, with which, however, the interior is far from corresponding. Its edifices present nothing remarkable: most of them are ill-built and irregular. The turks have numerous mosques there, and the Christians a church. Both in the town and in the environs you meet with ruins and broken columns; some lying, others half-buried, which convey some idea of its former grandeur and magnificence. The present population amounts to about seven thousand souls, four hundred of whom are Catholics.

The consuls of France resided for a very long time at Saida, in an extensive edifice belonging to their nation: they are now established at Beyrout, with those of the other governments. In their place there is a sort of agent, whom I cannot designate by any diplomatic denomination. It was by mere accident that I learned this circumstance. In passing the house of this personage, I was apprized of it by a singular flag: it was a ragged sheet of wretched paper, waving in the wind, on which I read the words: *vive la Revolution de* 1830! I should hardly think that this agent will apply to the minister for foreign affairs for an allowance on account of the state which he keeps up.

At this moment lodgings are preparing in the town for the officers of the Egyptian government entrusted with the administration of Syria. They will reside there at least for some time.

It was eight in the evening when I quitted Saida, the last town belonging to the tribe of Asher, and consequently in the Holy Land. I left it, regretting that I could not visit the tomb of Zebulon, which, I was as-

sured, is enclosed in a neighbouring mosque; and the cavern of the Sidonians, which the Crusaders in the twelfth century converted into one of their best fortresses. At six in the morning I arrived at Beyrout. There I was received with most particular kindness by the Austrian consul, M. Laurella, who had done me the favour to bespeak me a cell in the convent of the Capuchin Fathers.

Beyrout has suffered severely from the plague; but the disease had ceased: during the last fortnight, two Egyptians only had died, and no fresh cases were heard of. It is a commercial town, with a population of six thousand souls, and containing nothing remarkable but the ruins of the palace of Facardin, or Fechredin, a celebrated emir, said to be descended from Godfrey of Bouillon, who, in the fifteenth century, reigned for some years over part of Palestine, which he had conquered.

Mount Lebanon, at the foot of which Beyrout is seated, separates the Holy Land from Syria, whose loftiest mountains it overtops. Its name, which signifies *white*, is derived from the snow with which in many places its summits are perpetually covered. It presents lengthwise the semicircular form of a horse-shoe. The western part is specially denominated Lebanon; it extends from Tripoli to the environs of Damascus. The points most distant from the sea are not above two or three leagues from it: in other places the mountain approaches so close to the water as not even to leave a passage. The eastern part, which extends towards Arabia, and runs off below Damascus, is called by the Greeks Anti-Lebanon. Between the two there is a long valley, watered by numerous brooks, and extremely fertile: this is the Cœlo-Syria, or hollow Syria, of the ancients.

The total circuit of the two portions, to which the Europeans give the general name of Lebanon, is about one hundred leagues. To the south is Palestine; to the north, Armenia; to the east, Mesopotamia and part of Arabia Deserta; to the west, the Mediterranean Sea.

The mountains of the Lebanon, rising one above another, present four totally distinct zones. The soil of the first abounds in corn, and is covered in many places

with fruit-trees. The second is but a belt of bare and barren rocks. The third, notwithstanding its elevation, exhibits the aspect of ever-verdant trees: the mildness of its climate, its gardens, its orchards, full of the finest fruits of Syria, and the streams by which it is watered, make it, according to the expression of several writers, a sort of earthly paradise. The fourth is lost in the clouds: the snow with which it is covered, and the severity of the cold, render it uninhabitable and at certain seasons of the year almost inaccessible. On one of these summits are the cedars mentioned in Scripture.

The Lebanon is much more populous than the other mountains of which I have had occasion to treat. It contains numerous villages, inhabited by Mahometans and by Maronite Christians, and several monasteries. Among these holy retreats there is a very handsome building, six leagues from this place, on one of the loftiest points of the mountain, belonging to the Fathers of the Holy Land. It is called Larissa. The purity of the air which one breathes, and the peace and quiet that one enjoys there—but, above all, a desire to make the acquaintance of an Austrian monk, called Father Vital, a veteran of eighty, who is regarded in the country as a saint—have made me determine to go and spend a few days at that place. I shall then continue my journey, and I shall not omit to stop at least for a few moments at Antoura, to call upon the good sisters of the Visitation, for whom as I told you I brought alms, which I transmitted to them during my illness in Cyprus.

I have found here packets from Europe waiting for me. This is the first time for a year past that I had received tidings from my friends, and then what a chasm in this correspondence! The deficient letters are precisely those from the persons dearest to my heart. One must be in my situation to feel how extremely painful are such privations at so great a distance. Ah! what have I not had to suffer besides from the mere consideration of the grievous losses that may be inflicted by that destructive scourge which is at this moment ravaging the world! It is a trouble, for which I find no relief but at the foot of the altar.

LETTER XLII.

Shipwrecks—Dog's River—Road constructed by the Emperor Antonius—Antoura—Convent of Lazarists—Convent of the Visitation—Black Nun—Monastery of Larissa—Father Vital Filkuka—Armenian Convent.

Larissa, July 25th, 1832.

On the 14th, at a very early hour, I quitted Beyrout, where I left all my baggage. M. Laurella, the consul, did me the favour to accompany me to Antoura, four leagues distant. The morning was fine; but it betokened one of those sweltering days so common in Syria, especially at this season. We proceeded along the coast for nearly two leagues. It was rough. The foaming waves rolled in and broke very near us, covering the legs of our horses. I felt a certain pleasure in being amidst this white spray, which seemed to dash on as though to engulph us, and then retreated quaking; and my thoughts were raised with admiration towards Him who hath assigned to it limits which it cannot pass.

After a ride of a league, I perceived on the beach several hulls of shipwrecked vessels: this was to me a fearful sight. The consul told me that among these wrecks there were Tuscan, Neapolitan, and French vessels, lost in the storms of February last, the most violent that have occurred in the memory of man. He related to me, among other facts, that a Tuscan captain was on shore when his ship struck: his son was on board, and the vessel contained his all. In so cruel a situation the unfortunate father did not hesitate to defy the danger: throwing himself into a boat, he struggled resolutely against the fury of the waves, which threatened every moment to swallow him up; and, by his exertions, saved not only his son, but the whole crew and part of the cargo.

I know not, my dear Charles, anything more capable of disposing the soul to meditation, and inspiring serious and salutary reflections, than the sight of a wreck. Alas! is man, be he who he will, any other than a voyager, for a longer or a shorter period, on a sea constantly lashed

by the tempest? The fatal hour of shipwreck arrives for him a little sooner or a little later. Happy he, should he then be found worthy to be picked up by his heavenly Father and carried into port!

We soon quitted the shore and found ourselves among rocks. Having proceeded for some time along wretched tracks, great was my surprise to come to a very spacious road, not far from which a river rolled its azure waters between the hills. This river was the Lycus, the Wolf of the ancients: it is now called Dog's River; in Arabic, Nahar-el-Khell.

An inscription informed us that the road was constructed by the emperor Antoninus. It records that this emperor widened the way by cutting down the hills that border the River Lycus. Part of the inscription is effaced: the following words are still legible:—

CÆSAR M. AURELIUS ANTONINUS
PIUS, FELIX, AUGUSTUS

. . . PONTIFEX MAXIMUS
. . MONTIBUS IMMINENTIBUS
LYCO FLUMINI CŒSIS VIAM DILATAVIT.

This road, now much neglected, is about a quarter of a league in length. On leaving it, you find yourself close to the river, which is very rapid, but so shallow that we preferred fording it, though there is in this place a handsome bridge of five arches.

The heat was oppressive. Our horses, which had travelled for several hours in the sand, were fatigued. We alighted, sat down on the bank, in a thicket of rose-laurels, and rested ourselves. We quenched our thirst, but slowly and cautiously: the water of the Lycus is so cold that you cannot at one draught satisfy a burning thirst without danger.

We then began to ascend the arid hills by roads which reminded me of those of Judea, especially that from Rama to Jerusalem. One pass, in particular, was so frightful as to make us shudder. It is that where some years since the legate of the Holy See to the Catholics of the Lebanon was thrown, by a false step of his horse, to

the bottom of the abyss and killed. Our horses felt their way: the same cause, the least fragment of rock, by giving way, might hurl us to the bottom. I shut my eyes, at times, and found it difficult to repress a feeling of fear. . . . . . But, having cleared this terrible pass, we came to better roads; and were abundantly compensated for the fatigues we had undergone and the perils we had incurred. We were still travelling, it is true, among the mountains; but, in that part where we were, they were covered from their base to their summit with superb mulberry-trees, whose fresh and lively verdure astonished and delighted the eye, especially in a country where no rain falls for eight months in the year.

The charm produced by these vast forests of useful trees keeps increasing as you approach Antoura ; and the various monasteries, which you perceive around you on the heights, crown the prospect, if I may be allowed the expression, in the most graceful manner. With what ransport did I not again behold the august sign of the redemption, rising from the top of Catholic steeples towards the sky ; and how did I feel my heart thrill at the first moment, when, balanced above the smiling scenery, the bell sent to my ear its religious sounds, which I had not heard for so long a time ! Since I had set foot in Asia, having, I may say, seen nothing but mosques and minarets, surmounted with the crescent, it seemed to me to be an illusion.

It was one o'clock when we arrived at Antoura, and we went immediately to the convent of the Lazarists, who have succeeded the Jesuits in that village. We were received with particular charity and kindness by two French Fathers, whose virtues remind you of those of St. Vincent de Paul, their founder. Their house is small and simple, but arranged and fitted up with great taste ; the church is extremely neat, and the garden delightful. I observed in it orange-trees, such as I have never met with elsewhere : several of them are at least thirty feet high, and thick in proportion. The view is lovely, extending over a rich and fertile valley, bounded by the sea.

Before me, and at no great distance, was the handsome

winter habitation, built by the present legate Monseigneur Lozanna, bishop of Abydos, a prelate of great merit, to whom I had purposed to pay my respects; but who was then with the patriarch at the monastery of Canobin, which he had chosen for his summer residence.

After dinner, the consul and a Lazarist Father accompanied me to the convent of the Visitation. The good nuns were rejoiced to see me; they again thanked me for having taken charge of the alms sent them by their sisters at Friburg, and pressed me to come with the consul on the following day to dine with them. Their invitation was too earnest and too sincere for me to refuse it.

These nuns are all Arabs: they dress and live like the Visitandines in Europe, except that they go barefoot and sit upon the floor. Their house is poor: they have no other resources for the supply of their wants but the produce of their silk-worms, which is sometimes very considerable, and the donations of inhabitants of the Lebanon, or visiters from Europe.

Next day we were punctual to the appointment. We dined in the parlour with a Maronite bishop. The greatest part of the community, squatted on their heels, looked at us: never had the good sisters seen such a dress as mine. The consul, who is perfect master of Arabic, served me as interpreter. I spoke to them of Europe, of their order, of their holy founder. They listened to what I said with curiosity, with remarkable avidity, but when it came to their turn to say a few words, they talked of nothing but their wants, and to that subject they were continually reverting.

Two of them particularly attracted my notice: one is a hundred and six years old, and has spent ninety of them in the monastery; the other is a black, formerly a slave; she belongs to the choir, and goes by the name of Egyptian Mary. She is thus called, I am told, from her resemblance, as well in her piety as in the colour of her skin, to the female saint whom St. Anthony met with in the Desert, burnt, and, as it were, blackened by the sun. I had expressed a strong desire to see her. All the solicitations of the Superior to induce her to come for-

ward were at first unavailing: she even resisted a formal order for a moment, so that the reverend Mother was under the necessity of admitting, with some embarrassment, that the pious sister was rather obstinate. "But," added she, "this defect proceeds from her origin, and, of course, it has a claim to excuse." "And so much the stronger claim," I replied, "since the negroes figure the devil to themselves as white. Perhaps," I added, "Sister Mary may have caught a glimpse of my dress, and it may have frightened her." However, she soon repented of her disobedience: she threw herself at the feet of the Superior, begged her pardon, and came immediately to pay me a visit.

On the following day I parted from M. Laurella, who returned to Beyrout, and I set out with one of the Lazarist Fathers for Larissa.

From Antoura to that monastery there is no road, nothing but here and there narrow passes, unequally cut in the rock, on the brink of frightful precipices. I was mounted on an ass of uncommon strength, and which, though accustomed to perilous tracks, had the greatest difficulty to get forward. My fellow traveller had determined to walk. I was obliged to do the same, part of the way. The country continued to exhibit nearly the same aspect; monasteries, some vineyards, magnificent forests of olives, and more especially of mulberry trees, planted and kept in admirable order. Silk constitutes the principal wealth of the inhabitants of the Lebanon; if that resource should happen to fail, they would be reduced to poverty, they would be ruined.

At length, in about three hours, we arrived at the monastery of Larissa, the situation of which is extremely elevated. We found at the door an old man waiting for us. Hair white as snow, and a beard not less white, flowing over his bosom, gave him a most venerable look. His complexion was fair and ruddy, his smile that of an angel. Fain could I have taken him for one of those elders who surround the throne of the Lamb, and who had been permitted for a moment to revisit the earth. He said to me in German:—"Welcome, my good father and dear fellow countryman!" This was Father Vital

Filkuka, born in 1757, at Jamnitz in Moravia. In his youth he was a Franciscan monk. At the time when the convents were suppressed by the emperor Joseph, he became priest of Kirchwieder, in the district of Iglau, where he remained upwards of thirty years. At the age of sixty, he solicited, and with difficulty obtained permission to end his days in Palestine, in some house of the order to which he belonged by his vows. He has performed the office of warden at Nazareth, where his name is revered. For the last fifteen years, his virtue, and his warm, tender, indulgent piety, have been the edification of this part of the country. The first thing he did was to put me in possession of two rooms which he had prepared for my reception. No sooner was I installed in them, than he required of me, in the kindest manner, a formal promise to stay some time with him. I assented the more cheerfully, as I felt happy to have before my eyes so perfect a pattern, and to be able, in profound solitude, placed, as it were, between heaven and earth, to meditate with more attention and more freedom on the divine favours which had thus far accompanied my pilgrimage.

Larissa is a charming monastery, built in the style of the Italian convents. Everything about it is extremely clean; the situation is delightful, and the prospect admirable. You have before you the sea, which washes the foot of the mountain, forming a bay covered with vessels, entering or sailing out; on the right, hills garlanded with vines, and a deep valley, at the bottom of which stand here and there detached houses, surrounded with olive-trees; beyond it, on the shore, the little village of Jonah, so called because the prophet was cast up there by the fish which had swallowed him: on the left, at the distance of six leagues, Beyrout, its road, the shipping lying in it, a multitude of country-houses, and the surrounding forest. But what particularly calls and fixes your attention is not so much that sea, that bay, that town, that road, those vessels, as the sky of Larissa, pure, serene, almost always cloudless; as those exquisite nights, when the eye, concentrated, if I may use the expression, and far from all distraction, can contemplate

with holy ecstasy, by the mild light of the moon, those millions of stars, silently pursuing their courses in the firmament; those worlds without number, which, though at infinite distance, mark their presence by a luminous point, of whose brilliancy our finest diamonds exhibit but a faint image. When you are on the terrace of Larissa, in one of those magnificent evenings which are unknown in the West, but which are here so common, with what eagerness, with what transport, the eye feasts upon the divine spectacle, of those radiant spheres, glistening in every part, in every point, of boundless space! How the soul then detaches itself from earth! how it rises, how it soars from splendour to splendour! how it is rapt, and borne away into the bosom of God! Ah! let him come to Larissa! let him come, whoever he be, that has had the misfortune to suffer himself to be seduced by the vain sophistries of incredulity! let him come and breathe the pure ethereal air of the mountain! let him come and here contemplate that azure vault in which millions of orbs appear to be hung like so many torches to enlighten the darkness of night! let him come to see the great host of heaven pass before him! and, at the sight of such marvellous order, of so regular, so constant, a march, at the sight of so much beauty, so much grandeur, amazed, confounded, he will sink on his knees, before Him, who, by a sign of his almighty will, created all these things; and from his heart, moved, softened, filled with admiration, gratitude, and love, will escape, in spite of him, these words of praise in which the royal prophet proclaimed the glory of the Most High:—"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy-work!"

I cannot sufficiently admire the holy activity of Father Vital. The first to rise, it is he who rings the *Angelus*; presently afterwards he performs mass. As soon as he leaves the church, he is surrounded by a multitude of invalids, who have thronged from all parts to receive from him the relief of different kinds which they need. He sends none away without it: he listens to their complaints, he cheers them, he dresses their wounds, even the most disgusting; he gives them advice, medicines,

bread, vegetables, money, as far as the poverty in which he lives allows him. In the course of the day, he works in the garden, superintends the arrangement and cleaning of the church and sacristy, and enters into all the details of the household, which he directs with order and frugality. The change of occupations is the only recreation that he enjoys, and he is always busy when night overtakes him.

He has had the coffin made that is to receive his mortal remains: he visits it frequently, and he looks at it with the same joy that the worldly man would look at his new-built mansion. If he happens to betray any feeling of pain, it is because he is not already in possession of it. "There is my last home," said he; and then, with the ardour of a saint, he added:—"My soul is too long a stranger; who shall give it wings, that it may fly away to the place of its rest!"

Still, notwithstanding this continual thought of death, and amidst this impatience for the bliss of another life, he manifests in his habitual intercourse a cheerfulness the most unaffected and the most amiable.

From Larissa you perceive in the neighbourhood a convent of Catholic Armenians, where at this moment resides an archbishop, a man of extraordinary merit. I have been more than once to pay him my respects, and he received me with great urbanity. He did me the honour to invite me to dinner, and, out of consideration for me, the arrangements were in the European fashion, that is to say, the dishes were placed on a table, at which we sat on chairs, and not on the floor, according to the custom of the East. Priests waited upon us. On entering, they bent the knee to the archbishop; a mark of respect paid him by all ecclesiastics, when they come into his presence.

LETTER XLIII.

Departure from Larissa—Mountains of the Lebanon—Picturesque View—The emirs Feres, Soliman, and Abbas—Moucros—The Motoualis—The Maronites—The Druses—Dair-el-Kamar, the Capital of the Druses—Bteddin, the Residence of the emir Bechir, Prince of Mount Lebanon—Maronite Bishop—Dinner from the Kitchen of the Prince—The Palace—Interview with the Emir—His Wife—Visits to his three Sons—Horn worn by the Women of Mount Lebanon—Departure from Bteddin—M. de Lamartine.

Beyrout, September 12, 1832.

It was not without regret, my dear Charles, that I tore myself away from the peaceful and happy monastery of Larissa. Though impatient to continue my tour of Mount Lebanon, I could not resolve to part from the venerable man, with whom I had passed such delicious moments. On leaving him, my eyes filled with tears; I clasped him to my heart; I fell at his feet to receive his blessing, and we parted.

I took with me, as dragoman, a young Arab, named Francis, who has lived thirteen years in Rome, where he distinguished himself by proficiency in his studies, and who now holds the office of rector in a seminary of Maronites. We were accompanied by two moucros; a mule carried my baggage.

I intended in the first place to go to Bteddin, to visit the emir Bechir, prince of Mount Lebanon, who resides there. This prince and his family are accounted Mussulmans by the Turks, but it is certain that in secret they profess the Catholic religion. I have even been assured that the emir made a formal avowal of this fact to Ibrahim Pacha, who was not at all displeased at it. I was obliged to return to Beyrout, to apply to the Austrian consul for such papers and letters of recommendation as I should want. M. Laurella gave me with pleasure a letter for his brother-in-law, physician to the prince, and another for the prince himself. I also took with me some for the Catholic Maronite bishop, at whose residence I intended to lodge.

Next morning, at five o'clock, as we were leaving

Beyrout, we found in our way a regiment of Egyptian infantry performing the exercise. Unused to the rolling of the drum, our horses took fright, and we had some difficulty to make them go forward.

We first crossed a plain covered with firs, and, two leagues further, we entered the mountains of Lebanon. Some women, with baskets containing fresh figs, offered them to us; they were the best that I ever tasted. They refused to put a price upon them, and accepted with thanks what I thought fit to give.

As we proceeded, the scenery became more and more picturesque. Several detached hills exhibited the form of truncated cones. On their summits we perceived large houses and buildings, which had the appearance of castles. On the left, the view extended over the chain of the Lebanon, on the right were to be seen Beyrout, its environs, its road, and the sea. The foot was covered with olive-trees.

Struck by the aspect of one of those sites, crowned with a building, which to me appeared magnificent, I exclaimed:—"Happy the man who owns that dwelling."

"Happy!" repeated my dragoman, in a low tone, that he might not be heard by the persons of our retinue; "happy!" he repeated a second time, heaving a deep sigh! . . . . "he is deprived of sight!"

"And by what accident?"

"Alas! he is one of the emirs whose eyes were put out, and their tongues cut off by command of the emir Bechir, the reigning prince of the mountain, after a victory which he had gained over a party that was hostile to him. "Three emirs," continued he, underwent this operation, Feres, Soliman, and Abbas, and all three were his nephews! Bechir's wife, and the family of the condemned princes, throwing themselves at the feet of the conqueror, in vain solicited their pardon. The manner in which the punishment was inflicted is horrible. The mouth was forced open, and the tongue being pulled forward by an iron hook, was half cut off. The ramrod of a pistol, being made red-hot, was then thrust into their eyes.

"The emirs, or princes, who reign on the mountain,"

continued my dragoman, "are, as you probably know, of the family of Schahab-Druse. The first of that name came from the province of Hourad and the town of Schahbas; the emir Joseph Schahab is one of the latter. He whom you are going to visit has governed for thirty-two years. He first destroyed the Gemblati faction, which acknowledged Joseph, surnamed by it Suzbecki, as chief; and, having attained the supreme power by his valour, he has annihilated, in its turn, the very faction to which he owed his elevation."

This prince has three sons. The eldest, the emir Kassem, is not very bright, but he is an excellent man, and extremely polite to strangers. The second, the emir Khalil, is a good soldier; he is brave, but, like his elder brother, not particularly intelligent. The third, the emir Amin, directs all the affairs: he is his father's favourite and right hand; he is subtle, crafty, and is accounted one of the first living Arabian poets.

The heat was suffocating. Our moucros made it a pretext for stopping every moment, not so much to rest themselves or their horses, as to prolong the journey, and to get more wages. In Syria and Palestine these moucros are extremely rude and selfish; there are a few travellers but have reason to complain of their incivility and excessive greediness. One of the greatest miseries of the pilgrim is to find himself, in a manner, at the mercy of such fellows, without any knowledge of the language of the country; and it is a great deal worse when they have contrived to gain over the interpreter, as was the case with me on the banks of the Jordan and the Dead Sea. On this occasion, I might have reached Bteddin the same evening, had not their perverseness reduced me to the necessity of passing the night near a brook, wrapped in my carpet, which served at once for bed and bedding.

Next morning, at dawn, I roused my caravan, and we resumed our route. The road was very bad. Arid mountains, deep precipices, had succeeded the beautiful scenery which I had admired the preceding day: it was but now and then that landscapes less dreary met my view. The hamlets through which we passed were inhabited by Druses, who are most numerous in this part of the Lebanon.

Some writers have confounded, under the general appellation of Druses, the three principal nations inhabiting the Lebanon. These nations differ in religion and origin, and have nothing in common but their antipathy to the Turks, and their submission to the same chief, the prince of the mountain: they are the Motoualis, the Maronites, and the Druses, properly so called.

The first, to the number of seventy or eighty thousand, occupy the lower part of the mountains, and extend to Balbeck. They are Mahometans, of the sect of Ali, cousin-german and son-in-law of the Prophet. This Ali was to have succeeded his father-in-law as caliph; being unable to carry his election, he retired to Arabia, revised and modified the doctrine of Mahomet, and gained numerous partisans by permitting many things which his rivals prohibited; so that, in the year of Christ 656, he found himself at the head of a formidable sect in opposition to that of Omar. The tribes of the Motoualis, who finally settled in the Lebanon, and mingled with the Druses, follow, one may say, in all points, the civil and religious customs of the Persians, from whom they are descended. They would deem themselves polluted if they were to have communication, not only in their prayers, but even in their repasts, with any person of a different creed.

The Maronites are Catholic Christians, following the Syrian ritual. They are scattered over the valleys towards the centre of the Lebanon, and on the elevated points of the loftiest of its mountains. They extend also to the environs in the dioceses of Giblet, Botron, and Tripoli.

Respecting the origin of their name, historians do not agree: some assert that it is derived from Maronea, a town of Syria, mentioned by Ptolemy; others say that they were thus called after a man named Maron. But among these latter there is a difference of opinion. On the one hand, it is affirmed that he was a heretic, attached to the errors of Macarius, patriarch of Antioch, condemned in 681, at the sixth general council; on the other, it is maintained that he was the celebrated anchorite Maron, who lived in the fourth century, to whom

one of the yet extant letters of St. John Chrysostom is addressed, and whose life was written by Theodoret. You will guess, my dear friend, that the latter is the notion adopted by the Maronites.

The Maronites form of themselves a population of nearly two hundred thousand souls, most of whom are scattered in a multitude of villages, built amphitheatrically on the sides of the mountains, and almost to their very tops. Some of these villages are so close that it would be easy to pass in a few minutes from one to the other, if, instead of making the endless circuits which you are obliged to do by the steepness of the rocks or the depth of the gorges and precipices, you could traverse, as the bird flies, the space which separates them. They are pointed out by the flourishing state of cultivation of the contiguous lands, the soil of which has most frequently been brought thither by active industry. The buildings present nothing that distinguishes them from the hamlets of Palestine, unless it be the kind of castle which is the residence of the sheik, to whom the administration and the police of the place belong.

The vulgar language is the Arabic, and the learned language, which very few understand, is the Chaldean. It is in the latter that divine service is performed.

The monastic life is nowhere held in greater veneration: it is infinitely more respected and better appreciated, even by the infidel, than it is in the West, by many who still call themselves Christians. The number of the monasteries is considerable. They belong to different orders, but among these that of St. Anthony holds the first rank. You perceive them on the most rugged crags, and always at some distance from other habitations. The monks live there secreted, in a manner, and cut off from all intercourse. Their apparel is mean and coarse; they never eat meat, and but very seldom drink wine. Their principal occupations are prayer, manual labour, and agriculture: and they practise the most generous hospitality.

As for the Druses, properly so called, their origin is more uncertain than that of the two preceding tribes. According to some, they are thus named after the country

which they inhabit. If we may believe the most accredited traditions of the country, they are descended from the small remnant of the Crusaders, who, after the last disasters of the Christian army, took refuge and settled in this part of the Lebanon, under the conduct of the Count de Dreux, one of the bravest of the French nobles, whose name they assumed. The chronicles add that, having fortified themselves amidst these deserts, they contracted marriages with the females of the neighbouring villages; and that, having no priests, they gradually forgot the Catholic religion, and at length ceased to be Christians without becoming Mussulmans.

Part of them are reputed to be idolaters: they are said to worship an ox or a calf; and it is stated as a certain fact, that they keep in their houses figures of those animals.

Others, who are called among them Ukkals, that is, enlightened, in opposition to the vulgar, whom they term Djahels, or ignorant, have retained several Christian dogmas. They never swear, and make profession of exemplary piety. The highest in dignity live in a state of celibacy. They consider themselves as the purest of mankind, and regard as a pollution the slightest contact with the things by them reputed profane. They wear a white turban, in token of their purity. The turban of the others is in general of black or red silk.

You may read, as I have read, in the work of a certain philosophic traveller, that "several of the Druses admit the transmigration of souls; that others worship the sun, moon, and stars; that, among the Turks, they affect the habits of Mussulmans, frequent the mosques, perform their ablutions, and say their prayers; that, among the Maronites, they go to church, and use holy water: that, urged by the one or the other, they are easily persuaded to receive either circumcision or baptism." These are points on which I have not been able to collect information sufficiently positive to affirm anything; points which have been formally contradicted by geographers, and which I am the less disposed to believe, because the veracity of the writer who has advanced them is more than suspected.

A fact much more incontestable is, that, brave and warlike, a character which they have in common with the Motoualis and the Maronites, they always join the latter to defend the access to their mountains against the Turks, to whom, in other respects, they remain subject; and that they would not endure an oppressive yoke, unless from absolute inability to shake it off. Hospitality is their favourite virtue: their manners are mild; still they carry jealousy to a great length, and, like the Mussulmans, never allow their women to show themselves, unless veiled. In general, the only labour in which they engage is of the agricultural kind, principally the cultivation of the vine and mulberry-tree. The scattered population amounts to about one hundred thousand souls.

At ten in the morning, we came in sight of their capital, which in reality is but a considerable village. It is called Dair-el-Kamar, which signifies "House of the Moon." It is situated on the side of a hill, at the foot of which runs the brook Damour.

In advancing, we perceived, through thick clouds of dust which rose above the town, a great number of men upon the roofs. As soon as we entered, we discovered that this dust proceeded from some houses which they were pulling down. These houses belonged, we were told, to sheiks of the Druses, who, adhering to the Porte, had fled to the army of the Grand Signor, to serve their legitimate sovereign against the Egyptians, and against the emir, who had become Ibrahim's ally. Bechir, in revenge, caused their dwellings to be demolished, and their mulberry-trees to be cut down. A circumstance which caused me not less surprise and pain than this spectacle of destruction and ruin, was to see, besides the buildings which were falling with a crash under the hatchet and the hammer, Druses and Turks, cross-legged, with pipes in their mouths, watching with a stupidly tranquil look the devastation of the property of their kinsmen and friends; and not far off, traders, in bazars abundantly stocked, displaying and selling their goods quite covered with dust, and appearing wholly engrossed by their gains and profits. At some distance farther, they were dragging some unfortunate creatures to prison:

and a troop of boys, with the thoughtlessness of their age, were laughing and playing as they ran after them.

I stopped a few moments in a convent of Maronites, whence I despatched a messenger to the emir's physician, to acquaint him with my arrival, and to request him to give information of it to the bishop, to whom I was recommended.

On leaving Dair-el-Kamar, you perceive Bteddin, which is only a short league distant. The prince's palace and the buildings belonging to it, standing on the summit and slope of the hill, great part of which they occupy, present an admirable view. The mass of building, the trees, the cascades which embellish this abode, are the more striking, because the stranger is far from expecting so much grandeur and magnificence.

I entered Bteddin at eleven in the forenoon. I proceeded at once to the residence of Monseigneur Abdallah, who welcomed me in the most amiable manner, and immediately sent to inform the emir of my arrival. In a few minutes, he received a note in which his highness intimated that I should be admitted to his presence at four in the afternoon. Meanwhile, he directed that every attention should be paid, and that I should be supplied with refreshments from his own kitchen.

At one o'clock, several officers and a numerous train of servants came to the bishop's. They served up dinner for us on an enormous round table of tin, about six inches in height. The bishop and myself were the only persons at table, at which we sat cross-legged on cushions. About twenty small round cakes, almost as thin as a sheet of paper, were thrown by me, and I was provided with a silver spoon and fork. The bishop ate after the fashion of the Arabs, that is, with his fingers: like them he thrust his cake into the dishes, and scooped up with it what he wished to take. The dinner was not eatable. It was a load of viands in a sea of melted butter. An officer of the prince's kitchen, constantly on his knees beside me, held a large silver goblet with water, which he handed to me, from time to time. This servile attitude was distressing to me: all my intreaties could not prevail upon him to rise. It was only by hurrying

my meal that I could deliver myself from so degrading a politeness.

At four o'clock, I repaired to the palace, accompanied by the bishop and my dragoman. In front of that edifice there is an immense court, in which four or five hundred horses, bridled and caparisoned, were picketed. Their beauty, the richness of their housings, mostly of different colours—the brilliant dress of the riders, continually in motion to carry the orders of the prince—the successive arrival of the sheiks and grandees of the country, coming to pay their respects to the emir—had there been nothing to see but this, it would have been sufficient to compensate for the trouble of the journey.

From this court, you pass through a spacious porch to a flight of steps, which leads to another court of not less extent, paved with white marble, in the middle of which rises a jet-d'eau, that falls into a spacious basin, likewise of white marble. On the sides are the offices, the lodgings of the attendants, the baths, &c. At the farther end is the entrance to the palace.

This court was full of military men, civil officers, and slaves. My arrival set them all in a bustle: they ran to and fro, and crowded around me. On reaching the door of the prince's apartments, I was introduced with the bishop and the dragoman.

The emir is an old man of seventy-three, of a strong constitution, and enjoying excellent health. A thick, long, white beard covers his whole chest. He is very ugly; but the richness of his dress, and a studied elegance, by diverting the eye, render the plainness of his person less striking. He received me in a large hall, round which were ranged, as usual, piles of cushions. Through an open door, at the extremity of this apartment, was to be seen another handsome room, adorned with a fountain. His Highness had at his side a dagger enriched with diamonds: he was seated on a magnificent carpet, smoking. Officers, servants, white slaves and black slaves, stood at a respectful distance.

On appearing before him, I bowed in the European fashion: he returned the salutation by putting his hand to his heart, and made me a sign to sit down by him—I

obeyed. The bishop seated himself near me; my dragoman remained standing. After the first compliments, I was offered refreshments, coffee, lemonade; and at the same time, a napkin, richly embroidered with gold, was handed to me to wipe my mouth.

The emir asked me some questions: as I did not answer them so quickly as he wished, he conceived that I had a dislike to explain myself before the attendants. He made a sign with his hand, and the whole of them rushed towards the door, like a flock of sheep running away from a wild beast. The slightest gesture, the slightest motion of a despot, produces on the slaves who surround him an effect which cannot be described. If this motion, this gesture, is violent, it is like a thunderbolt.

Bechir was grieved to learn that the emperor of Russia had withdrawn his consul-general from Alexandria: this intelligence gave him some uneasiness. He appeared to me not less affected by the information which he had received, that France was sending thirty thousand men to the Morea; ten thousand of whom, he said, must have already arrived. He talked a good deal about my sovereign, the emperor of Austria, and the death of the duke of Reichstadt, for whom he seemed to feel much interest, and made me promise not to quit his residence without calling again.

On leaving him, I was shown over his palace, which I found less remarkable than I had at first imagined it to be. His officers conducted me into several rooms, where the gilding was lavished with extreme profusion, but without taste; and they were astonished that I was not enraptured at so much magnificence. The only thing that struck me by its beauty was the bath, which is of marble. I was assured, however, that the harem is the most splendid part of the palace; but that I did not see. The physician and a Catholic Armenian bishop, the confessor of the princess, are the only males who have the privilege of entering it. I have used the term *harem*, because the Arabs continue to give that appellation to the wing inhabited by the emir; though, contrary to the custom of the princes of the mountain, he has but one wife.

Though advanced in years, he is married to a second wife, only sixteen years old, for whom he shows the fondest affection. When, after he had lost his first wife, who was older than himself, he thought of forming a new connexion, he sent a person to Constantinople to buy for him three young Georgian slaves to choose from: for the sum of forty-three thousand piasters, his commission was executed. The youngest was selected, instructed in religion, baptized, and united to the prince : the two others became her servants. Magnificent presents, including diamonds of great value, were made to the bride. She was worthy of the attentions and the generosity of her husband for her amiable disposition, her prudence, and, above all, for an extraordinary modesty, that is not affected by the high rank to which she has been raised. But what is, perhaps, still more remarkable, her two companions, who had an equal right to hope to become princesses, content with their lot, wait upon her most assiduously, without envying her better fortune.

From Bechir's palace, I went to the residence of the emir Amin. He was that day giving audience. Among the throng which filled the hall, I remarked the grandees of the mountain, whom it was easy to distinguish, because they were seated, while all the other persons present were standing. Amin received me very graciously, made me sit down by him, and asked me a great number of questions, but with such volubility, that my dragoman had scarcely time to interpret them, and I to utter a few words in reply. The ravages of the cholera made him uneasy; indeed to me he appeared greatly alarmed. Our conversation took place in the presence of the whole assembly: grandees, servants, slaves, all listened, laughed or looked grave, according to the nature of the subjects spoken of. Most of them joined in the conversation : this is customary; and, to judge from the impression produced upon me, nothing is more embarrassing for a stranger.

I then went to the emir Khalil's. I found him superintending the wainscoting of a room. The prince has a mania for building. It is a great chance that a room pleases him for six months : he is frequently tired of it

sooner: he then pulls it down, builds another on a new plan, decorates it with fresh ornaments; and, before he has inhabited it many weeks, he begins to dislike that. Seated on a velvet cushion, he was smoking his pipe, amidst cabinet-makers, carpenters, and locksmiths; who, with hatchets, hammers, and files, made a noise that stunned you and set your teeth on edge. Like his brother, he desired me to sit down by him, ordered refreshments to be brought me, and talked to me about war. I have already told you that he is a good soldier: he has distinguished himself in the service of Ibrahim; and, when his father, the emir Bechir, had to fight the parties which disputed the supreme authority with him, he was ably seconded by Khalil. The latter is, nevertheless, without appointment and without authority.

My last visit was to emir Kassem, who resides in a separate palace. He received me with the utmost politeness. He is considered as the least clever of the prince's three sons. All I know is, that I thought him the most amiable of the whole family. He presented to me his son and his daughter, both extremely well-bred. The young princess, who is sixteen, possesses extraordinary beauty, and, what is more, extraordinary modesty. I was not a little surprised to see her wear on her head a prodigious horn; this is an article of dress with almost all the married women of the Lebanon. The horn is longer or shorter, according to the rank of the individual; that of the princess is full two feet and a half long; they alone have a right to wear it before marriage. This singular ornament is in the shape of a speaking-trumpet. It is of silver or gold. The ladies of Mount Lebanon put a large veil over it. Their attachment to this appendage amounts in some even to passion. They never lay it aside, either in health or in sickness, or even on the bed of death: they expire in this head-dress. The horn is then sold, and the produce of it is usually spent in having masses said for the peace of the soul of the deceased: hence, perhaps, the affection which they manifest for this object.

There is another sort of horn, which some women wear on the side of the head. This covers the ear and

the cheek, and its point projects beyond the shoulder. It nearly resembles, in form, the horn used by deaf persons.

The emirs, Amin, Khalil, and Kassem, have a strong resemblance to one another, and are all remarkable for extraordinary corpulence. Their wives are the only society of their young step-mother.

These three brothers, and the prince, their father, as I have told you, are Catholics; they are very punctual in the performance of their religious duties, but they do not go publicly to the church at Bteddin: they hear mass in a private chapel. This conduct appears to me the more extraordinary, since the greater part of the inhabitants of the mountain are Catholics, and since the Turks are now without power, and the Egyptians very tolerant. The emir Bechir and his whole family pay the utmost respect to the bishop: I even observed, when I visited the emir Kassem, that the princess, his daughter, kissed the hands of the prelate.

A magnificent Catholic church is at this moment building at Bteddin: the expense is defrayed by the prince.

I had seen all that could interest my curiosity in this residence. Having determined to set out at night, on my return to Beyrout, I went to take leave of the emir. The prince lavished upon me marks of honour and distinction in the presence of his court, and offered to give me not only letters of recommendation to the different authorities, but some of his guards for an escort, so long as I should be in his territories: but, as this would have been at once expensive and useless, I thanked him, and declined the offer.

I set out, at eleven o'clock, by magnificent moonlight. At noon, next day, I was at Beyrout. There I found Monsieur and Madame de Lamartine, with their young daughter, Julia. I cannot tell you how much I was delighted to see the illustrious author of the "Meditations." His poems have procured me many happy moments, and, in particular, his beautiful verses of "Hope" have often soothed and comforted my heart. It was a real happiness to me to have an opportunity of expressing my gratitude to him.

M. de Lamartine was going to make the same tour which I was finishing as a pilgrim. As I could stay but a few days at Beyrout, during that short interval I omitted no occasion of profiting by his society and enjoying his interesting conversation.

LETTER XLIV.

Departure From Beyrout—Tripoli—M. Lafond—Italian Renegado—Sponge Fishery—Mountains of Lebanon—Village of Eden—Remarkable Walnut-Trees—Sheik of Edin; his family—Cedars of Lebanon—Maronite Herdsmen—Valley of Bekaa—Balbeck—Charity of the Catholic Arabs—Temple of the Sun—Damascus—The Lazarist and Franciscan Fathers—The Via Recta—House of Ananias—Window from which St. Paul was let down by the Christians; Cavern where he secreted himself—Catholic Churches—Description of Damascus—Bazars—Khans—Mosques—Caravan of Mecca—Population—Fanaticism.

Damascus, October 13, 1832.

I LEFT Beyrout, my dear Charles, on the 14th of last month, and embarked at eleven o'clock for Tripoli. Though I have a great dread of sea-sickness, from which I always suffer exceedingly, still I preferred that mode of travelling to a journey on horseback, for two long days, on a scorching beach. It was not long before I repented my choice. At midnight, the sea, at first calm and tranquil, became so rough, that the master of our vessel, who had stood out too far from land, began to be very uneasy. The waves, following one another with frightful rapidity, came roaring around the vessel, frequently rising above it and threatening to engulph us. I looked sorrowfully at them, holding by the ropes, and regretting that I had not adhered to the resolution which I had more than once formed, not to expose myself again, unless in case of absolute necessity, to the fickleness of an element which had already involved me in serious dangers.

Near me was an Egyptian colonel, a man of most remarkable aspect, who had been severely wounded at the siege of Acre. His wounds were far from healed: they gave him excruciating pain, and he moaned heavily. The

mortal agony which he endured was legible in his countenance. I would fain have cheered him: he knew no more of my language than I did of his; my looks alone expressed the sympathy that I felt. He comprehended them, and appeared thankful. Alas! what services can a stranger render to a stranger in a fishing smack tossed by the waves, and in which the seafaring man himself sometimes finds it difficult to keep on his legs!

However, in spite of the rough weather, we made nearly seventeen French leagues in six hours, and at daybreak found ourselves off Tripoli. We landed in the harbour, at the village called La Marina, about half a league distant from the town.

From the port I proceeded to Tripoli, and alighted at the convent of the Franciscans of the Holy Land. The only persons there were Father Fortunatus, president of the establishment, and another monk. Both made me most welcome. Several European officers in the service of the viceroy lodged or dined that day at the convent. What was my surprise to meet again with M. Lafond, a Frenchman, employed as surgeon-major in the Egyptian army, whom I had known at Jaffa. He appeared not less pleased than myself at this unexpected meeting, talked to me about his journey, inquired concerning my intended route, and proposed to accompany me. I accepted this obliging offer the more cheerfully, because he was perfect master of Arabic, and I could not have a more amiable or more capable interpreter.

There is nothing remarkable about the convent and the church, but the court before the entrance is very handsome; it is paved with marble, and adorned with a large basin, from the centre of which rises a magnificent fountain. The garden is striking, from the number and the beauty of its fruit-trees, and also on account of its high trellises, so thickly covered with foliage as to be impervious to the rays of the sun: in their shade the community in general dines.

A few moments before we sat down to table, Father Fortunatus, who was walking there with me, took me aside, and said: "I must apprize you, Father, that you will dine to-day with a young Italian, the commandant of the citadel,

and captain in the regiment of the guards, who has turned Mahometan, and taken the name of Mustapha."

"What!" I exclaimed, hurried away by a transport of indignation, which I was not able to repress; "what! would you make me dine with an apostate! Surely, you cannot mean that! no, no; never, never!"

"You are too nice: he dines here every day, and nobody objects to it."

"Indeed, I must confess, it is not what I think quite right."

"I am not the person who would strive to extenuate the heinous offence which he has committed. He was only seventeen at the time; but he repents it: he means to leave this country as soon as he can obtain payment of a sum which the government owes him, and which he cannot do without, and is determined to seize the first opportunity to reconcile himself with the Church. With the exception of this fault, he is an excellent man, and I assure you that, in his present disposition, he is better than a great many Christians."

"What say you? with the exception of this fault? Is not apostacy the most heinous of crimes?"

"I declare to you," continued the Father, "that this Mustapha protects all the Christians; that he not only bestows on them considerable alms, but that, in general, he renders us the greatest services; and it seems to me but reasonable to make some allowance for this conduct, and for his repentance."

"All this, Father, is well, very well; but all this cannot excuse his apostacy. I will not see him, still less dine in his company."

"I entreat you!"

"It is useless; I should think that I was sinning."

"I will take the sin upon myself."

We were still talking, when a party of officers came towards us. "There he is!" said the Father, "there he is! the foremost is he." A shudder seized me. I raised my eyes, and behind a young man of about twenty-six, with an interesting countenance, and pale and melancholy look. He came up to me; he would have kissed my hand, but I drew it back with horror: he perceived it,

and kept silence. I remarked myself that the settled sadness expressed by all his features had become still deeper ; pity entered my heart, and triumphed over the repugnance which I felt to sit down to table with him.

He ate little. During dinner, an officer having called him Mustapha, the name by which he is known : "My name," said he, with a deep sigh, looking at me, "is Jean François." I cannot describe to you the impression made upon me by those few words, uttered with courageous penitence. The horror which he had excited in me gave place to the tenderest compassion. "Poor Jean François!" said I, inwardly ; and my soul lifted itself towards the God of mercy, imploring him not to forsake this unfortunate man. After dinner, when about to take leave of us, he came to me, and offered me his hand, without speaking a word : his look seemed to say :—"Have pity on me !"—and I gave him mine, at the same time pointing to heaven.

He came to see me in the evening. Our conversation lasted till very late. I hope, from the infinite bounty of our merciful Saviour, that he will lose no time in returning to the bosom of the Church, and doing penance proportionate to the enormity of the offence which he has had the misfortune to commit.

Next morning, I began to explore Tripoli. It is a very ancient town, on which, from the very first, its harbour conferred great importance. Mention is made of it in the second book of the Maccabees (xiv. 1). The Turks call it Tarabolas. The name of Tripoli, which the Greeks gave it, and which we have retained, signifies three towns, because it is, in fact, composed of three towns not far distant from each other, the principal of which belonged to the Syrians. It is seated at the foot of Mount Lebanon, and watered by the Nahar Kadischa, a river, which, being directed into several canals, at once supplies the wants of the town, and serves for irrigating the fields and gardens. The population, computed by some at ten thousand souls, is almost all Mahometan. The number of the Catholics is very small : there are, nevertheless, three convents ; that of the Franciscans, at which I lodged ; one of Capuchins ; and one of Bare-

.ooted Carmelites. Each of these houses is usually inhabited by only two or three monks, and sometimes contains but a single individual.

The environs are delightful, but unhealthy as a place of abode. Epidemic fevers prevail there, as in Cyprus, in the months of July, August, and September, and sometimes even later.

At the beginning of the twelfth century, this district, having been conquered by Baldwin, brother of Godfrey, was erected into the county of Tripoli, and subsisted under that name till the downfall of the Crusaders.

In one of my excursions, I made the acquaintance of M. Lombard, of Marseilles, who has been settled at Tripoli for some years. He, as well as his family, loaded me with civilities. It is one of the most hospitable houses that it has been my lot to meet with. The stranger, to what nation soever he belongs, is treated there with such attention and kindness as frequently make him forget the fatigues and hardships which he encounters in visiting these parts.

I went with M. Lombard's children to the beach, to see an establishment for the sponge fishery. From one hundred and fifty to two hundred Greek divers were engaged in this occupation, under the direction of the proprietor, who cannot carry on this business for his own profit without paying a yearly duty to the government. He is a Greek, a very amiable man, married to a French woman. He made me a present of a very fine sponge, still attached to the part of the rock on which it grew. M. Lombard, senior, at whose house I left it, kindly promised to pack it up for me, and to send it to Beyrout, where I shall find it on my return.

Hitherto I had always remarked that, when labouring men returned home after the arduous toil of a long day, the first thing they did was to seek rest. The Greek divers presented a totally different spectacle; they were harassed with fatigue; and yet, on their return, I saw them frolicking, dancing, and frisking about, till they were out of breath.

About to resume my peregrinations, and embarrassed by my baggage, I resolved to buy an ass to carry it for

me. I was speaking of this intention before some officers of Ibrahim's army, when one of them requested my acceptance of a donkey for which he had no further occasion, and which he thought very likely to suit me. In spite of my urgent entreaties, he would not allow me to reimburse, at least, what the animal cost him; and next day his servant brought me a two-year-old colt, very small, but strong, sturdy, and nimble as a deer: I could not possibly have found a beast of that species more intelligent, more willing, and more docile. Buried, in a manner, under his burden, his head alone was visible: in spite of this heavy load, he ascended the highest hills, without ever stopping, vieing in speed with our horses, and sometimes even distancing them. In the evening, weary and jaded, he would come and lie down by us on the carpets which we spread for ourselves to sleep upon, waiting to be relieved of his burden, and to be supplied with food; and next morning he trotted off again as fresh as ever. I need not tell you what care I took of him: not trusting in this particular to my guides, not even to the one to whom I consigned my horse, I cheerfully shared my bread with him, and, grateful for the services that he rendered me, I would have composed, I would yet compose, a most glowing panegyric on his race, if feeling were sufficient to make a painter or a writer.

Accustomed to ride a horse, and to give him the preference in everything, I had more than once laughed at the panegyric written upon the ass, by one of the most eminent poets of our age. On seeing how much I owed to mine, I reproached myself for my injustice, and thought that Delille had not duly appreciated his worth, when he said of him:—

> The ass, with less of beauty, spirit, fire,
> Is substitute, not rival, to the horse.
> To the proud steed he leaves his stately step,
> His splendid trappings, and his haughty gait:
> A clown his teacher, and his lesson stripes,
> A sumpter-saddle all his finery,
> And all his fare a thistle.
> To him Mars opens not his glorious school;
> No conqueror he—he aids the peasant's toil.

When young, he has his graces, gambols, sports:
Grown up, is patient, strong, and never tires;
In sad old age his thankless owner pays
By willing, persevering services.
The farmer's and purveyor's sturdy drudge,
With hollow flanks, bending beneath the load
Of balanced panniers, to the tradesman rich,
And frugal dame, he daily bears supplies,
And feeds the City, fasting oft himself.
With steady step, he clears the precipice;
Knows well his way, his master, and his home.
Which of man's servants is content with less?
In poverty he lives, grows old, and dies.

Are you not astonished that, after the enumeration of so many qualities which render this valuable animal so worthy of interest, Delille should wind up with merely saying, that

He interests by the *hardness of his lot*?

I will add in confidence, and in all the simplicity of a pilgrim who has visited, as a Christian, the stable at Bethlehem, and the streets through which Jesus passed at the time of his solemn entry into Jerusalem, that in me the ass excites more than interest; that he appears to me with a sort of glory, when I recollect that he warmed with his breath the Lord of heaven and earth, the Saviour of the world, lying in his manger; and that he bore Him on the day when the children of the Jews, with palm-branches in their hands, accompanied his triumphal procession.

Forgive this digression, my dear Charles; I shall now return to my long journey.

On the 18th, I set out early in the morning with M. Lafond. We were accompanied by a servant and two guides. We took the road to Eden, a village of Mount Lebanon, eight leagues from Tripoli, and three from the Cedars. I had letters of recommendation for Boutros Karam, sheik of the place, celebrated for his hospitable attentions to travellers, and I had no doubt that we should be kindly received by him.

After an hour's ride over a plain, sprinkled with a few agreeably situated hamlets, we found ourselves at the foot of the mountains of the Lebanon, mostly quite bare,

exhibiting nothing but rocks and precipices, on the declivities of which we perceived, at long intervals, a few olive-trees and mean scattered dwellings.

At noon, the heat having become insupportable, we halted near a poor-looking village, where we nevertheless hoped to be able to procure for money some refreshment. We asked for bread, eggs, butter, milk, fruit. "We have none of the things that you want," was the answer given by all to whom we applied: it was not their fault if we did not conclude that they lived upon air. Luckily, a peasant chanced to pass with a large basket of grapes: we bought his stock, and, seating ourselves in the shade, made an humble repast.

At three we resumed our march. We had proceeded two leagues, when we saw a sheik mounted on a fine horse, and followed by several armed attendants descending from the mountain. It was Boutros, at whose house I calculated upon lodging. This meeting seemed likely to derange my plans, and gave me some pain. I accosted him and delivered my letters. "I am very sorry," said he, "that I cannot return; Amin, son of the emir Bechir, sets out this evening to join Ibrahim, and I am obliged to hasten away to Tripoli to pay my court to him. But I beg that you will go forward," he added, "and be assured that you will be as well received at my house as if I were there. I shall be back again in a couple of days." And he immediately despatched one of his servants to give notice of our speedy arrival.

As we advanced, Nature appeared more smiling and more luxuriant. Verdure, clumps of trees, a more vigorous vegetation, cheered us after the dreariness and the sterility of the country that we had been traversing. We soon found ourselves amidst magnificent scenery. Nothing can be more lovely than Eden and its environs. Enchanted by the scene that met my view, I was no longer surprised that many, misled still more by the fertility of the soil and the beauty of the spot than by the identity of the names, should have taken so delightful a country for the terrestrial paradise.

I was particularly struck, on entering the village, by the walnut-trees, of prodigious height and thickness,

from which the inhabitants were beating down the fruit. These gigantic trees were surrounded by a multitude of men, women, children, and young persons of both sexes, singing, dancing, and indulging in noisy mirth. These songs, this hilarity, this bustle, imparted to Eden an air of life and happiness which I had not perceived any where since my departure from Switzerland.

Meanwhile, the son of Boutros Karam, being apprized of our approach, came forth to meet us. He accosted us with as much politeness and kindness as if we had been old acquaintance, and he requested us to accompany him to the house where his father lived and where he was directed to receive us.

The dwelling of the sheik is a new-built edifice, the interior of which is not yet finished. We were ushered into the hall of the divan; our host declared that this should be my room, and he lost no time in paying us all the attentions of hospitality.

Boutros keeps, according to the custom of the country, a great number of servants. A certain grandeur pervades his establishment; the manners prevailing in it more nearly resemble those of Europe than they do anywhere else. By his orders, dinner was prepared; we took it, seated upon the floor on cushions and carpets, at a circular table of tin, covered with a very handsome tablecloth. We, as well as the family, had napkins, knives, and silver forks—things not to be seen in the houses of the other sheiks of the Lebanon. As they had been apprized that I never ate butchers' meat, other dishes were provided for me, but so well dressed that I should almost have supposed them to have been the work of a French cook. During dinner the most marked attentions were paid to us, and so indeed they continued to be the whole time we were under that hospitable roof.

In the evening, I had to receive a great number of the inhabitants of the village, who were anxious to see me. Seated on the floor around me, these good people smoked after the fashion of the Arabs, chatted, and talked to me with a certain freedom of manner, yet at the same time full of civility and respect; and bawled very loud, as

though, by raising their voices, they could render their language more intelligible to me. To the noise made by them was added that of the servants, coming, going, or stopping, detained by curiosity or a desire to be useful to me. Stretched myself on a cushion of crimson satin, which I had been forced to accept, it was impossible for me to answer the thousand questions addressed to me from all quarters by my visiters: and the extreme complaisance of M. Lafond, who kindly undertook to be my interpreter, was fairly tired of satisfying them. The apartment in which this scene took place was the hall of the divan, that had served a few hours before for our dining-room. At length, weary of talking and listening, annoyed by the smell of the pipes and still more by the smoke, which had become so dense that I could no longer distinguish the persons about me, though it cost me an effort to disturb them, I determined to "break up the sitting."

Next morning, by sunrise, I proceeded to the church. It is very spacious, neatly adorned, and kept extremely clean. I passed a short time there, returning thanks to God for the blessings with which he had favoured my travels, and imploring a continuance of them for the future. I then visited some of the chapels; there are eight or ten of them, which surprised me the more as the village is not large. I afterwards learned that the monks of the neighbouring monasteries come thither every day to perform mass; and that, on account of the salubrity of the air, such of the Fathers whose health is impaired by age, austerities, or labour, frequently take up their residence for a time in the cells contiguous to these sanctuaries.

In the afternoon, I went to see the spring which is called the Fountain of St. Sergius, from the name of the convent that stands close to it. This spring is celebrated for the extreme coolness of its water. I had heard a great deal about it: but what I had been told appeared so exaggerated, that I had obstinately refused to believe it: nothing, however, is more true. Not having a goblet with me, and resolved, in case I should not find it so cold as it was described, not to afford cause for the ob-

jection that it had become warmer in the hollow of my hand, if I were to take it up in that manner, I knelt upon the ground to drink. My lips were instantly like ice, and I admitted, not without surprise, that I had never met with such a spring.

On the following day, Boutros returned to Tripoli. He appeared delighted to find us still at his house. His behaviour to us only heightened the idea which we had been taught to form of his politeness, his kindness, and all his hospitable and patriarchal virtues.

This good sheik has six children, two sons and four daughters. I had not seen either the latter or their mother: they keep themselves constantly shut up in the interior of the house, and veil themselves most carefully when they go to church. Yet, in my quality of monk, he thought it right to do me the honour of introducing me to them: an aged inhabitant of the mountain, who understood a little French, was my interpreter. I was received by these ladies with demonstrations of deep respect. When I entered, they made a low obeisance and kissed my hand. They were uniformly dressed in a gown of blue casimere, embroidered with silver. No sooner was I seated on the divan, than the eldest of the daughters came and covered my face with a veil, under which she held a perfuming-pan, whence rose a smoke having a most agreeable odour; and afterwards sprinkled me with rose-water so profusely, that, overwhelmed by the heat, and being bareheaded, I was ready to faint. Conceive, if you can, my embarrassment to reconcile with politeness the efforts that I made to withdraw myself from so singular a ceremony. They were unavailing: I was obliged to submit to it.

After this aspersion, sweetmeats and coffee were set before me on a small table. My dress was evidently an object of curiosity for these ladies. They were particularly pleased with my chaplet of olive-stones from Gethsemane. They perceived the crucifix which I am in the habit of wearing. When they were informed that it had lain upon each of the holy places, they took it, raised it to their lips with the most touching piety, and asked me several questions of religious import, which I had great

pleasure in answering. They listened with a religious earnestness to the particulars which my long residence at Jerusalem and my excursions in the environs enabled me to give them.

On the day before my departure, a cause was brought to the tribunal of Boutros, who, in his quality of sheik, is judge in most of the disputes which arise among the inhabitants of his jurisdiction. I was present, and witnessed an act which perfectly characterizes the spirit of mildness, moderation, and indulgence, that guides his whole conduct. The case related to an ass which had been stolen from him four years before, and which his people pretended to have discovered among those of certain Bedouins who were travelling in the Lebanon. The ass and the Bedouins were seized and brought before the sheik. Whether it was out of love and zeal for justice, or with the sole view of paying court to the magistrate, that the charge was preferred, I cannot tell. But this I know, for I have had more than one occasion to remark it, that the number of courtiers, to the lowest as to the highest authority, is perhaps more considerable in Asia than in Europe, where that crew swarms. Be this as it may, the room was crowded with the multitude of accusers, all of whom cried out with a look of conviction, and their eyes steadfastly fixed on the animal: "Why, it is he! to be sure it is! he himself!"—"Though it is so long since he was stolen," said another, "I know him again; he is very little altered; those are his eyes, his ears, his hide, of a dark gray!"—"And the tail!" exclaimed a third. "Only look at it!—that rat's tail! The scoundrels! they have taken care to mutilate what he would have been most easily known by. It has evidently been cut." And all present began to pity the lot of the unfortunate donkey. M. Lafond interpreted what they said in the most humorous manner possible.

The accused Bedouin was a very handsome man. He had a defender: both spoke alternately with great calmness, and clearly proved that the imputation was false and calumnious. Every moment, however, a score of voices interrupted and contradicted them. The sheik listened without saying a word; but it was easy to read

in his countenance on which side he perceived the truth. When the cause had been pleaded by both parties, he pronounced a sentence by which he acquitted the accused, grounding his judgment on the unsatisfactory reasons for the accusation, rather than on the allegations of the defendant, which, moreover, were unanswerable. Then, though respect imposed silence upon all mouths, it was evident, from the mere inspection of their faces, that, mortified at having gained nothing by their officiousness, the accusers condemned the judge.

The inhabitants of Eden, in general, vie with their excellent sheik, as far as their circumstances permit, in kindness, and even generosity towards strangers. Whenever we went abroad, all were eager to pay us marks of attention and respect, and to anticipate us by offers of service. The children ran to meet us, bringing fruit and flowers. The very washerwomen who saw us testified a wish to do something for us: they inquired, by very expressive signs, whether we had not shirts or other garments that wanted washing.

Every winter, the village is covered with snow for several months, and the cold there is very intense. In that season a few families only stay in the place: most of them descend into the plain of Tripoli, or to other not elevated situations, and there dwell till the return of the spring.

I left Eden at daybreak, on the twenty-first. The sheik and his family were stirring: they had all risen to take leave of me. Deeply affected by this last attention, which crowned all the kindnesses that they had shown me, I laid my hand upon my heart, striving, by this gesture, to express to them my warm gratitude; I then pointed to heaven, to tell them that we should there meet again some day; and I departed, praying to God to reward with his choicest favours the piety and virtue of these good and generous hosts.

We took the way which leads to the cedars of Lebanon; those cedars so celebrated in Scripture, to which are attached so many impressive recollections. The morning was magnificent. A countless multitude of birds warbled in the shade of the trees which covered them

with their branches ; the grass in the meadows glistened with the pearls of the dew : it was still the rich and beautiful vegetation of Eden. At the distance of half a league, scarcely any vestiges of it were left : we then found ourselves in stony and difficult tracks.

Two leagues from Eden, we perceived, at the bottom of a valley, the village of Beschierai. Its environs, which are tolerably well cultivated, gave a momentary relief to the eye, weary of seeing nothing but naked rocks and loose stones. On advancing, we discovered a mountain frightfully sterile, and partly covered with snow. A clump of verdure rises from the middle of the plateau, and attracts the more notice because it contrasts so strongly with all that surrounds it. This clump at times appeared, and was intercepted from our view, according to the windings of the road which we were obliged to follow. At length we were near enough to perceive that it was a small wood, and to distinguish trees of prodigious size : these were the cedars. Impatient to reach them first, I accelerated my pace. I was close to them, when all at once I perceived four horses, richly caparisoned, grazing, and near them a young Arab very elegantly dressed. He ran towards me, as if to prevent me from passing, and addressed to me some words which I could only explain to myself by the violence of his motion and the fire which sparkled in his eye. I halted, and waited to ascertain more precisely, by means of my interpreter, what he meant and what was the cause of his anger. At the same moment I saw a young female running as fast as she could, with an infant in her arms, towards the horses. According to the fashion of the ladies of the Lebanon, she wore an enormous horn, and a large veil over it. While I was looking at her, the Arab disappeared. In a few minutes I saw him retiring hastily, accompanied by two armed attendants. On the spot which they had quitted I found a stone altar, and upon it a brisk fire, in which was burning incense, or a kind of gum that exudes from the cedars. My dress, and the swiftness with which I approached, had, no doubt, alarmed the young man and his female companion. Who were they ? what were they doing ?

were they Druses? was that fire upon the altar used for some superstitious or pagan ceremony? I cannot tell.

A sojourn of a few weeks in Palestine and Syria is quite sufficient to enable you to appreciate the degree of credit due to the statements of certain travellers, when they relate to facts or details connected more or less with religion, and the faithful exposition of which would turn to its glory. But you must come to the Cedars, if you would know to what a length they have carried their endeavours to deceive the reader, and to abuse his credulity, even in the smallest things, in those which neither have nor can have any other than an indirect relation with the Christianity which they hate. Listen to what is said by one of these writers, who has made the more dupes, because he is always accurate enough, whenever a feeling of pride and animosity does not impel him to violate truth.

"These far-famed cedars," says he, "are like many other wonders; when close to them, you find that they are far from upholding their reputation. Four or five thick trees, all that are left, and which have nothing particular about them, are not worth the trouble that is taken to clear the precipices which lead to them."

Would you not say, my dear friend, that a man who talks in this manner has taken the trouble to clear the precipices which lead to them, that he has closely examined those trees, that he has counted them, and that his report is true.

But, in the first place, what seems to me to prove that the cedars in question are not so "far from upholding their reputation" as the writer would have us believe is, that this "reputation" has lasted some thousands of years; that from age to age they have been visited by celebrated men of all nations, not one of whom has said that he grudged his trouble; and that, in spite of the attempts made in our time to depreciate them, persons of no mean frame in the religious and literary world have not been afraid to encounter "the precipices which lead to them," and have given such accounts of them as have since encouraged more than one Christian, and even more than one merely curious traveller, to follow their steps.

And then, my dear Charles, if it be true that the author has taken "the trouble to clear the precipices which lead to the cedars," if it be true that he has examined them "closely," tell me if the philosophic mania must not strangely affect the sight. Instead of "four or five thick trees," I have counted at least thirteen or fourteen, not only as thick as the thickest trees that I ever met with in my many peregrinations, but so thick that several of them are six or seven fathoms in circumference. Some, at a certain height, divide into five or six principal branches, which, issuing from the same stem, form so many new trees, planted, as it were, in the trunk, and of such diameter that two men cannot span them. Their tops, proportioned to their prodigious bulk, rise majestically towards the sky, and resemble vast domes of verdure, beneath which the Christian has the happiness to find altars erected to the God whom he adores, and the ungrateful philosopher, at least, a cool and delightful shade, where he may rest himself after his fatigue.

Had these cedars nothing else "particular" about them but their immense size, which attests their high antiquity, and confirms the traditions which represent them as having existed in the time of our Saviour, and even still earlier, would not this be enough to excite a curiosity wholly profane, especially if it be certain, as it actually is, that no traveller has ever seen the like to them in any other country, or any other mountain, of the globe; and could the real man of science, after examining this wonder of nature, reasonably grudge his "trouble"—he whom the desire of knowledge sometimes impels to travel over the world, to defy dangers, to climb the most rugged, the most inaccessible rocks, in the mere hope of finding —— what? a new, an unknown plant, an herb of doubtful utility, or, perhaps, of no use at all!

Shall I give you my notion of the matter, my friend? I strongly suspect that it is because there is something too "particular" in the history of the cedars of Lebanon, that the poor philosopher, conceiving that he could not well omit noticing them, has contented himself with briefly observing, and by the way, as it were, that "those which are left have nothing particular about them." The

cedar of Lebanon is a tree of which frequent mention is made in Scripture. Its height, its incorruptibility, the fecundity with which it propagated itself on the mountain, often serve for points of comparison with the qualities and virtues of the righteous man. The cedar is called the tree of God. The temple of Solomon, and the palace of that prince, were of cedar; and the dimensions of the trees "which are still left" sufficiently explain why and how this wood was employed in preference, either to form by itself part of the sacred edifices, or to be introduced into the body of walls, which it equalled in thickness, and sometimes in length. Idolatry itself held these cedars in esteem, and deemed it worth while to encounter the precipices to see them. It employed them in the temple of its gods. Pliny relates that the roof of the temple of Diana at Ephesus was of this wood, and the ancients sometimes made colossal statues of it. Do you imagine that, if Volney had borne in mind merely these two "particulars," he would have shown such contempt and disdain for the Lebanon. For my part, when I observe with what complaisance he stops to describe the least important, nay, the most trivial things, without complaining of the trouble he has taken to come at them, whenever he does not meet in his way with objects which excite his irreligious hatred, I cannot think that I am slandering him in declaring that, if his route had carried him to Epire, he would not have failed to visit the grove of Dodona, even though he were destined to find there only "four or five" thick oaks, very far beneath their "reputation."

Be this as it may, the truth, is, as I have just told you, that, instead of "four or five" cedars, I have seen thirteen or fourteen, exceeding in size all that I ever observed before. Foreign travellers, English, Dutch, French, who visited these parts in preceding centuries, remarked a greater number of them;* and these cedars of the first magnitude are not the only ones. Near them grow three or four hundred others of different ages and smaller dimensions, some in detached groups, others

* Travels of Maundrel, Thevenot, Bruyn, &c.

scattered irregularly around the large trees. These younger ones are in general very high, but of a pyramidal form. Their evergreen foliage has been very aptly compared with that of the juniper; their cones resembles those of the pine; I brought some of them away with me. These cones are with difficulty detached from the tree. Their kernels yield a sort of gum, which has a very strong but agreeable smell.

Every year, on the day of the Transfiguration, the Maronites repair to the mountain and hold a festival, which they call the Feast of the Cedars. The patriarch goes thither, accompanied by several bishops, a great number of monks, and a considerable concourse of persons of their persuasion. Mass is performed at stone altars, set up at the foot of the thickest trees. Some have taken occasion, from this religious ceremony, to assert, that the Maronites do not believe the transfiguration to have taken place on Mount Tabor. This is an error: their service pointedly expresses the contrary.

With a view to preserve the most ancient of the cedars, and to prevent accidents that might lead to their destruction, the patriarch has thought it expedient to pronounce excommunication against every one who shall presume to cut the smallest branch without a formal permission. But the dread of incurring this penalty has not always been strong enough to prevent the offence; and I cannot help thinking that it is only by a special protection of Providence, that, in the course of so many ages, they have not all perished.

On leaving Beyrout, I had promised a young lady—one of the most amiable that I ever met with in my life, a girl, ten years old, with an angelic countenance, and embracing, in an extraordinary degree, intelligence, candour, and sweetness of disposition—Julia de Lamartine—to engrave on the thickest oak of the Lebanon the name of her father, that of her mother, and her own. I kept my word, though the execution proved a far more difficult task, than I had imagined; and I congratulated myself on the success of my labour, when I considered that the illustrious poet, on coming to the Cedars, would find there the names of his wife and his daughter, "those two parts of his heart."

We staid about four hours at the Cedars. Long did I walk about alone, amidst the religious gloom which they threw around me. My mind reviewed the records of their ancient glory: then, meditating on the long duration of their life, which led to salutary reflection on the brevity of the life of man, my soul cheered itself for the rapidity with which my days pass away by the thought of those eternal years which await it in a better world, of which the longevity of the trees that I was admiring is not even a shadow. I could not quit them without turning about twenty times to look at them, without long betraying involuntarily by my sighs the deep impressions which they left upon my mind.

It was too late to reach Balbeck the same day. We took the road to it, however, hoping to find by the way some village where we might pass the night. We had first to ascend a steep mountain. As we advanced, whitish clouds, formed by the vapours of evening, rose from the low grounds, and looked like new mountains covered with snow, rising from the bosom of the valleys. The air became colder. On reaching the top, and on the point of descending the opposite side, we were obliged to alight, and to lead our horses, which had some difficulty to keep their legs. Some hours after sunset, we came to a spring of fresh water, and resolved to halt there till morning, though we had to apprehend attacks from the wild beasts, to which the rocks and the woods in the neighbourhood afford a retreat. I had heard M. Laurella, our consul at Beyrout, relate that, travelling some years ago in the environs, with an escort of twenty men, he fell in with ten or twelve tigers; that his people were preparing to fire, but he prevented them; and that the tigers had suffered them to pass without appearing to notice them. I recommended the like prudence to my people, and, by way of precaution, we lighted large fires. By daybreak we were traversing the extensive plain which leads to Balbeck. At seven o'clock, as the heat began to incommode us much, we turned into a meadow bordered by rocks, in which we had perceived two cabins formed of trelliswork. Around them were grazing a great number of cattle, tended by Maronite herdsmen.

We went straightway to these poor people, and asked for some milk. They cheerfully offered us more than we wanted ; and gave us cream, new cheese, and bread baked in the ashes, which we ate with great relish.

They had perceived from my dress that I was a monk. After paying us all sorts of attentions, they came and humbly kissed my hand, and then loudly called their family scattered about the meadow. The boys, a few hundred paces off, were looking after the sheep. They all ran up, kneeling at my feet; they begged, they implored me to bless them. Oh! how I wished at the moment that, with the authority conferred by the sacred character of the priesthood, I could have fulfilled more completely the wishes of their faith ! Ought I, because I had not the honour of being a priest, to hesitate to satisfy them ? I thought not: and, raising my hands over them, I blessed them, and fervently besought heaven to grant the prayers that I addressed to it in their behalf.

I was preparing to leave them, when I saw a woman advanced in years approaching with slow steps, and carrying with effort a large vessel full of water. It was the grandmother of the colony. I conceived at first that she was bringing this vessel to invite me to wash my hands, and was about to plunge them into the water, when M. Lafond apprized me of my mistake. She had brought it that I might do her the favour to bless it. Induced by the same motive which had determined me just before, and unwilling to grieve her by a refusal, I complied with her desire : the joy diffused over her countenance expressed her thanks.

At length, it was time to mount my horse again. All eagerly hastened to assist me, to touch my garments, to express the regret which they felt on account of our too prompt departure. We were at some distance, when, on turning round, I saw them still on the threshold of the cabin, following me with their eyes, saluting me with their hands, and thus sending after me their last farewell.

I could not possibly deceive myself as to the motive of these extraordinary attentions. It was too evident

that I ought not to consider them as paid to myself personally. A mere traveller, I was, and I could be, to these generous herdsmen nothing but a stranger, worthy, at most, in the same degree as my companions, of the hospitable kindness which they had shown us. What was it, then, that had gained me such particular testimonies of veneration? My monastic habit, that white robe, that scapulary, that crucifix, had apprized them that I was in the service of the God whom they worshipped; and, in like manner, as the loyal subject honours, in the gown of the magistrate, in the sword of the warrior, the sovereign whom both serve, these kind herdsmen, Christians in spirit and in heart, had joyfully seized the occasion which I presented to them to honour Jesus Christ by their homage. On this subject, my dear friend, shall I communicate to you a reflection which, in the course of the years that I have passed in the world, has often powerfully struck me? In the military uniform, or even in the dress that I was accustomed to wear, what marks of respect have I received, which would not have been paid me by most of those who did me that honour, if they had seen me in the robe of the Trappist! At the present day, more than ever, how many people are there from whom such or such a dress is sufficient to draw signs of contempt or esteem, expressions of love or hatred! Long before I embraced the monastic life, I could not comprehend, and still less have I since been able to comprehend, how it is that a habit which implies a stricter obligation to serve the King of heaven and earth, to love one's brethren, to do them good, to set them an example of the virtues, to pray for them, should become to certain persons an object of derision and of insult. Whenever I have endeavoured to fathom the reasons of such conduct, I have been obliged to pause, that I might not arrive at what I would fain not discover, irregularity of mind, and disgraceful passions of the heart. Not but that I am well aware that, in religion and the priesthood, there are men who disgrace their cloth; but, in this case, to be at all reasonable, we ought to confine our scorn to the person. Who would ever think of cursing the uniform of the brave, because it has sometimes covered the shoulders of a coward?

At ten o'clock we perceived the long valley of the Bekaa, which is the Cœlo-Syria of the ancients. It is an extensive and fertile plain, constantly irrigated, and frequently flooded by the waters descending from the mountains. The frequent incursions of the Arabs, since the middle of the last century, do not permit all the advantages promised by the excellence of the soil to be derived from it. It is very ill cultivated. Beyond it we begin to discern Balbeck, at the foot of the Anti-Lebanon.

In the middle of the Bekâa stands a lofty pillar, the appearance of which excited my curiosity. I am not aware that it is mentioned by any traveller : I resolved to visit it. As it was out of our way, my guide did all he could to divert me from my purpose, representing that I should meet by the way with obstacles and difficulties which I should have great trouble to conquer. I answered only by clapping spurs to my horse, and in half an hour I was at the foot of the pillar. It is about forty feet in height. It stands on a large base, and is surmounted by a capital. A considerable number of ravens were perched upon it ; at the noise of my approach, they greeted me with loud croakings, and flew away. I know not to what age or to what nation this monument belongs ; there is no inscription to indicate the period or the motive of its erection ; and none of the persons whom I have questioned has been able to furnish me with information of any weight concerning its origin. At Damascus, indeed, I learned from M. Baudin, the agent of France, that it is commonly called Amoad-Aiat, after the neighbouring village, and that the people of the country have a notion that it covers two tombs.

Balbeck is the Heliopolis, or city of the Sun, of the ancients : it is situated on the slope of a hill. A dilapidated outer wall, scarcely two fathoms in height, in those parts which are in the best preservation, furnishes a pretty correct idea of its former extent ; but, with the exception of a few wretched buildings, and a small number of mud huts, the anterior is either vacant or covered with rubbish. The residence of the bishop is itself but a sort of cottage, darker, and less roomy than that of a peasant

in Europe. The population which, about the middle of last century, still amounted to five or six thousand, is now reduced to fewer than eight hundred, who have no other means of subsistence than what they derive from the laborious cultivation of an almost barren soil. The political and civil authority is in the hands of an emir, who, by that title, is but the vassal of the pacha of Damascus.

I was unwilling to incommode either the bishop or the inhabitants by soliciting hospitality; and, on the other hand, I wished to be as near as possible to the famous temple of the city of the Sun, one of the most magnificent and least injured of any that have been left us by antiquity. I went and selected a resting-place near it, under some trees by the side of a mill.

I had not been there above an hour, when I saw a young lad, coarsely attired, but with a most interesting countenance and modest look, coming towards me. He brought a cheese and four small loaves, sent by his parents, Catholic Arabs, who, informed that there was a pilgrim monk under the trees, had hastened to supply him with a dinner. I cannot tell you how this pious attention affected me. The abject distress prevailing at Balbeck and throughout the whole country, the personal poverty of those who thus shared their food with me, the earnest manner of the little messenger who made signs for me to eat, the joy which he manifested at having executed the commission of his kind parents, were more than enough to move me, and to make me set a high value on their present. No sooner had he left me than, with eyes fixed on what he had brought me, I could not repress my tears, and again they flowed, when I afterwards lifted to my mouth this gift of indigence. In the evening, the messenger brought me another supply like that in the morning, to which his mother had added some cooked onions and eggs. He bowed, laid his offering at my feet, and retired. At this second visit, I wished to make him some recompense; he obstinately refused it for a long time, and at last accepted it only for fear of giving me pain. Alas! what in the sight of God was my generosity, compared with the admirable charity of these poor

Arabs to a stranger, whom they had never before seen, from whom they had nothing to hope, and whom they were not likely ever to behold again!

Meanwhile, I was anxious to gratify the impatient curiosity that I felt to visit the temple of the Sun. Perhaps I ought to say no more than that nowhere in Asia are there ruins so magnificent, so vast, as almost to make one doubt whether those who erected the buildings, of which they are the relics, belong to the same race of men as people the earth at this day. Notwithstanding the immense progress of dynamics in the last centuries, more than one man of science would still deny the very possibility of so gigantic a monument, if the facts were not there to humble and confound modern weakness and impotence: suffice it for me to say, that I shall not undertake to give you a description of it. This task, moreover, has been performed, imperfectly, it is true, by eminent writers, in such a manner as to daunt any one who should be tempted to take up the pencil after them. Unfortunately, their works, especially that of Wood, are scarcely to be met with but in public libraries, and thither he must go to consult them who would fain make himself acquainted with the most astonishing wonders of ancient architecture, without exposing himself to the hazards of a long journey. A stranger to the science, and scarcely able to stammer the language of the arts, I shall not even attempt to give you a sketch of them. You will recollect that I am but a pilgrim, and must be content with a few traits.

Under the name of the famous ruins of Balbeck are comprehended those of two principal temples, dedicated to the worship of the Sun, the more considerable of which is situated to the north-west of the other. The loftiness of the walls, and of such of the columns as time has spared, the boldness of the vaulted roofs, the incredible bulk of the stones in their various dimensions,* the

* Most of them, that is to say, the smallest, are from eight to ten feet long, and six or seven broad and thick: others, and in no small number, are thirty feet long; some sixty feet by twenty, and fourteen or fifteen thick. One, left unfinished, being cut on three sides only, is sixty-nine feet long, thirteen broad, and the same thick.

delicacy, the richness, the variety, the profusion of the sculptures and ornaments, the numberless fragments of capitals, friezes, entablatures, cornices, with which the inner area is strewed, those which you meet with scattered about everywhere outside the enclosure, excite, ravish, and finally tire admiration. The soul has need to take breath, as it were, and to rest from the fatigue of admiring, that it may begin again and admire anew. All that it has hitherto considered as great now appears little. The feelings which it experiences, at the same time that the eye and the thought are wandering from object to object, are reproduced, developed, multiplied, and succeed each other with such rapidity, that it can scarcely distinguish, and still less find expressions to describe them. What I can best explain to you is the situation of the different edifices which these ruins still permit one to observe, without scrupulously binding myself to strict mathematical accuracy.

The first, that is the larger of the two temples, stands in the direction from east to west, on a line of such extent that the eye cannot measure it. A magnificent portico, raised upon an esplanade, bounded by two pavilions, formed the entrance. In the space between the pavilions were twelve columns, the bases of which are still distinguishable.

Beyond this portico is an hexagonal court, nearly two hundred feet in diameter, enclosed by a series of regular chambers or chapels, opening to the interior; and the roofs of which, now in ruins, were supported by columns systematically arranged, and in equal number on every face.

This court is but the vestibule, if I may be allowed the expression, to another more elevated and much more spacious court, to which you ascend by a very gentle slope. This second court is square. On the right and left, against the lateral walls by which it is enclosed, are backed seven large chapels, the second and fifth of which are semicircular, and the others square, without any other entrance than the vacant space between the columns on which the roofs rested. In the interior of them you perceive a sort of niches, either salient, or formed in the

wall; destined, no doubt, to receive the statues of the deities worshipped there, as well as the sun.

Advancing from the middle of the quadrangular court, in a right line towards the east, you enter the sanctuary, that is to say, the temple, properly so called, to which all the preceding buildings are but accessories. It is a parallelogram, about two hundred and seventy feet long, and rather more than half as wide. It presents ten columns in front, and nineteen on either flank. Of these columns there now remain but six, between the ninth and the sixteenth of the left flank. Their enormous thickness and their height, which is upwards of seventy feet, assist one to form some idea of what the temple was when entire. In the course of ages, the winds deposited on the entablature, which still covers their tops, a heap of vegetable dust, in which they afterwards sowed the seeds of a multitude of plants, whose stems, foliage, and, at certain seasons of the year, flowers, hanging down in garlands, produce an effect that is quite picturesque. These six columns are to be seen at a great distance. We perceived them between the trees of Balbeck, as soon as we entered the valley, which we traversed in the morning.

To what age, to what nation, belongs this monument! This archæology, disconcerted by the silence of history, has not been able to determine in a precise manner. Some writers assign for its date the reign of Antoninus Pius, that is, the middle of the second century. It must be admitted that the Corinthian order, which prevails throughout the whole of the architecture, and some inscriptions, in which the name of that prince occurs, seem at first to favour this opinion. But the perceptible differences to be remarked, either in the quality or the cutting of the stones and the marbles used in the construction of the sacred edifices—the evidently more antique character of certain ornaments—the little correspondence, or even harmony, which they have with other ornaments, in a more modern style and taste—and the particular type of certain subjects, represented by the sculpture—all incline the inquirer to go back much farther to discover their real origin; and, in thus going

back, they are all lost in the night of ages, where not the least glimmer of light breaks through the profound darkness. The Arabs, who care little for the objections of science, are the only persons who have not been puzzled to tell the epoch and the author of the wonders of Balbeck. They ascribe the honour of them to Solomon, whose name is always upon their lips, whenever a question arises concerning the founder of buildings, anterior to the Christian era; of which some traces are yet to be found in Palestine or in Syria: and to explain how so many stones, so many prodigious blocks, whose bulk, length, and weight appear so totally disproportionate to the strength of man and the power of the levers known at the period which they assign, could be extracted from the quarry, cut, removed, and raised, they hesitate not to assert that the prodigy of so inconceivable an operation is due to genii, who performed the work under the orders of the great king.

The second temple, to the south-west, is of a later period. The name of Caracalla, met with in some inscriptions, has led to the conjecture that it was erected or repaired during the reign of that emperor, about the commencement of the third century. But, as the stones of this edifice furnish the same indications as those of the great temple, it has thence been concluded that it was partly built with the materials of the latter, or that it was itself a reconstruction of a more ancient temple from its own ruins.

This temple, standing on rather lower ground, is an oblong square, with the entrance towards the east. Though it is not possible, either within or without, to follow the details, unless by passing over the immense quantities of rubbish, it is, nevertheless, in much better preservation than the other temple. The outer walls, which supported the roof, now fallen in, are still standing. Their height is about six fathoms. On their inner face, among other very rich ornaments, are to be seen several niches of exquisite workmanship, between which rise fluted pilasters of the Corinthian order, surmounted by an entablature, the frieze of which is a garland admirably sculptured. On the outside, in a line parallel

with the walls, ran a peristyle or portico, nine feet wide. The roof, formed of concave stones, adorned with sculpture representing the gods or the heroes of paganism, was supported by a series of columns of the same order as the temple, about eight fathoms in height, and five feet in diameter. There were eight in front, and thirty on the flanks : no more than seventeen are now left.

Beneath the pavement, encumbered with the immense ruins of the temples, there is a subterraneous vault of the like extent. It is about thirty feet in height. The stones of which it is built are said to be not less surprising for their dimensions than those observed above. I had not time to inspect it.

History, which, by a remarkable disposition of Providence, is frequently silent respecting the origin of families, of nations, and of their institutions, or which records only uncertain and obscure things concerning them, because in general what it would have to say would only serve to gratify a vain and sterile curiosity ; history, I say, never fails to mark their development, their transitory greatness, their fall, and their ruin : and God wills this, because there the pride of man finds grand, instructive, and awful lessons. While pausing to consider with some attention the incredible solidity of the walls, of the columns, of the vaults, in short, of the different parts still remaining of the sacred edifices of Balbeck, one is astonished that the entire monument is not yet standing, and one is tempted to believe that it was the hand of man, often more destructive than that of Time, which made the ruins spread out before one's eyes : but the fact is not so. It is true that, when Christianity began to supersede, in Heliopolis, a worship not merely idolatrous but hideously obscene, Christians, fired with a holy zeal, did break in pieces the statues of the gods to whom the religion of the country made it a duty to sacrifice the chastity of virgins ; but the temple remained. It was purified and converted by the emperor Theodosius into a church, and was used for the Christian worship till the moment when the country fell under the dominion of the Arabs. Twice has Cœlo-Syria been since visited by earthquakes ; twice has the ground trembled beneath

the ponderous masses of Balbeck ; and twice has the shock disjointed, dislocated, thrown down, the most elevated parts, and piled ruins upon ruins.* It was not till then that the barbarous hand of man interfered. Turkish avarice and cupidity fell foul of columns and arches, for the sake of the iron cramps which fastened them together; and, to obtain these, it set to work to mutilate the fragments.

I quitted the ruins with the last gleam of twilight, and I must confess that already I no longer felt in my soul that passionate admiration, the emotions of which had constantly agitated me during the long hours that I had spent in examining the temples ; or that painful regret which had so keenly affected it at the sight of such a mighty destruction. It was wholly engrossed by other thoughts. What are become of the priests, the worship, the festivals, of Balbeck ? All gone, all swept away ! What has become of the gods ? The gods ! they did not last so long as their sanctuaries, as their images, fragments of which I may possibly have seen .... And I felt more deliciously the happiness which the Christian enjoys to know and to serve the true God, the great God, the God of gods. Him whose worship will not finish with ages, Him whose priests succeed each other from generation to generation ; Him who shall never cease to have temples on earth, till the earth itself is dissolved, and to receive there the homage and adoration of his servants ; till He shall have collected them all in the eternal temple of the heavens.

At midnight we were on the road to Damascus. Dissatisfied with the guides whom I had hired at Eden, I changed them at Balbeck. The new ones, like the others, led us out of the way. Travelling at random, we sometimes found ourselves upon heights without outlet, sometimes in impassable ravines; liable, every moment, whether on horseback or on foot, to the most dangerous falls. Judge how long the night appeared to us in such a situation. At length, daylight appeared. We then discovered our error ; instead of turning to the

* During the earthquakes in 1202 and 1759.

right, we had been all the while keeping on to the left. Thanks be to heaven, we had not met with any accident!

In going from Balbeck to Damascus, one is at first obliged to ascend bare, sterile mountains, whose dreary aspect and strange forms sadden the eye of the traveller: it is a real desert. Further on, in descending their rugged declivity, you discover by degrees some traces of vegetation. You soon perceive a narrow valley, divided longitudinally by a stream, which fertilizes its borders, and, parting into several branches, proceeds to water the plain of Damascus: this is the Barrada. As we advanced, the aspect of its banks became more and more pleasing. The poplars and the willows which shade them, the verdure by which they are carpeted, the charming spots that are discerned on the slopes of the rocks, covered here and there with shrubs, and even with large and healthy trees, a few villages advantageously placed on points not far distant, embellished the landscape and refreshed the eye.

We halted a few moments on the bank of the river to enjoy this agreeable prospect, to quench our thirst, and, screened from the sun, to recruit our strength, which the difficulty of the road and the excessive heat had nearly exhausted: but for this halt we could not have borne the fatigue of the journey. Unluckily, the Barrada in its windings runs so close to the mountains as in some places to wash their flanks: to pass these the traveller must either strike into the rugged paths among the rocks, or make up his mind to venture through the water, which is not without danger.

We arrived in the evening at a large village, the name of which I have forgotten. It is situated near the river. We stopped at a mill, on the roof of which we were obliged to pass the night. This roof, flat, like the roofs of all the houses in this country, was of wood, and in a bad state. No sooner was I upon it, than a board gave way beneath me, and my leg sunk through into the mill. In the night I was uneasy from the apprehension that, should such another accident occur, some of us might be thrown upon the wheels. Fortunately nothing of the

sort happened. Very early next morning we resumed our journey, and hastened our march, that we might enter Damascus before night.

Of all the Mussulman cities, Damascus is the most intolerant and the most fanatic: it abhors everything European—persons, religion, and even dress. Before the Egyptian troops made themselves masters of the place, it would not have suffered Christians to travel on horseback in its territory; the only animals they durst ride were asses, and from these they were obliged to alight on entering its walls. Even now, in spite of the yoke to which it is forced to submit, the protection which the conqueror grants to such of the inhabitants and travellers as are not professors of the religion of Mahomet is a subject of exasperation; and a stranger would expose himself not only to the insults of the populace, but to real dangers, were he to attempt to appear in any other dress than the Turkish. The Lazarist Fathers, and the apostolic legate himself, wear the Turkish costume; the Franciscans and the Capuchins alone, whose establishments have subsisted upwards of a century, still retain the religious habit, to which the people have at length become used.

Being apprized of the unfavourable dispositions of the Damasquins towards strangers, and fearing, too, that my Trappist robe might furnish occasion for blasphemies against our holy religion, I had taken the precaution to provide myself with Turkish garments. We were still more than two leagues from the city, when my people thought that it was time to attend to my toilet. We stopped for the purpose, under the trees of an orchard. Never was metamorphosis more speedy or more complete. Nothing could have agreed better with the disguise than my long beard. "Why," said those about me, "he looks exactly like a Mussulman! Who could tell he was not one!" The Turk who performed the office of valet, being too short to be able to place the turban on my head, begged me by a sign to kneel down. "Kneel!" I desired my interpreter to say to him:—"a Christian never kneels but to his God. Let him get upon this log," I added, pointing to the trunk of a tree that lay near us, "and then he will be tall enough." He complied, grumbling.

We were just ready to start again, when a Turk, coming from Damascus, informed us that the cholera was making frightful havoc there, and that it was sweeping off at least two hundred persons a day. This intelligence surprised me the more, because, from all the information that I had hitherto received, I made sure that it had entirely ceased. After a moment's reflection, I determined to run all risks, and gave the signal for departure.

We found ourselves once more upon sterile mountains, and, by some fatality or other, our guides appeared embarrassed, as if incessantly seeking the way, and not knowing where we were. The heat was suffocating: my head, muffled up in the turban, was drenched with perspiration. Enveloped in a cloud of dust, tired of seeing nothing but rocks around me, I fancied in my impatience that we should never arrive. I conceived that we had utterly lost our way, when, at length, our men seemed to recognise the localities. They led us into a narrow gorge, assuring us that we were not far from the *Holy City*. Such is the name given by the Mahometans to Damascus, because it is the general rendezvous of their pilgrims coming from the north of Asia to visit Mecca. We took courage, and in a few minutes we reached the extremity of the defile.

All at once, the most extensive, the most beautiful, the most delightful prospect that I had ever beheld, presented itself to my view. My impatience ceased. I could not help stopping to contemplate and to admire it. My eye wandered over, and lost itself in the immensity of the magnificent landscape that lay before me: a plain, the extremities of which, on the south and east, towards the Desert, are imperceptible in the distance beneath the azure of a boundless horizon; a forest of trees, of all kinds and of all sizes, some lifting up to the skies the dark and tufted foliage of their pyramids, others spreading themselves out into large parasols; lemon, orange, apricot-trees, displaying on all sides their golden fruit; tall vines, clinging to the trunks and branches which they meet with, or running in vacant spaces along the supports which the hand of man has provided for them, and distinguish-

able by the delicate green of their foliage, which hangs in festoons; here and there kiosks, pavilions, country-houses, and, all around, gardens, pastures, in which sheep, horned cattle, horses, and camels, are grazing; in the dells, formed by the irregularities of the ground, shrubberies, gardens, fields, and habitations; the seven branches of the Barrada pouring along their streams, and vieing, as it were, with the numerous brooks which shall in its course impart most beauty, freshness, and fertility, to the spots to which Nature or human industry has charged them to bear the tribute of their waters; lastly, in the centre of this enchanting landscape, Damascus, proudly displaying its ramparts, its towers, its battlements, the crescent on its mosques, its numberless minarets, and affording glimpses, at several points between the trees of the forest, of its humble dwellings, as well as its most magnificent structures, arranged like the steps of an amphitheatre.

It was five o'clock in the evening when we entered the city. The gate where, till of late, as I have told you, the Christian was obliged to alight, and where he was even subjected to the grossest extortions, was guarded only by a few men, whose countenances bespoke the dissatisfaction which they felt to see a stranger thus enter the *Holy City* on horseback. They allowed us to pass, eyeing us with sullen scowling looks.

At the time of my visit to Mount Lebanon, I had made the acquaintance of the abbé Tustet, a young Lazarist of great merit, and received from him gratifying testimonies of kindness and friendship. I knew that he resided at Damascus, with the abbé Poussous, superior of the mission; and I determined to solicit hospitality of these two good Fathers. On seeing a Turk enter their court-yard, though they could easily perceive from the expression of my countenance that I lacked something of the Mussulman gravity, they were amazed: they knew not what to think. But, presently, M. Tustet recognised me; he threw himself into my arms, and I was received, welcomed, with all the charity of a disciple of Vincent de Paul, with all the politeness that does honour to the French character, and with all the cordiality of a friend who meets again with a friend.

I soon learned that what we had heard concerning the ravages of the cholera was absolutely false. The Turk, from what motive I know not, had told us lies, and I was right in believing that the scourge had ceased.

Next morning, early, I went to pay my respects to the Franciscan Fathers, and I was desirous to visit the place which the presence of St. Paul has rendered for ever celebrated. The abbé Tustet had the kindness to be my guide and interpreter.

The first house towards which we directed our course is situated near the east gate, "in the street which is called Straight." According to tradition, it is that mentioned in the ninth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, which belonged to a Jew named Judas. St. Paul, struck with blindness, on his way to Damascus, was conducted thither by his companions after his conversion. There he was at prayer, when Ananias, a disciple of Jesus Christ, directed by a divine inspiration, went to inquire for him, and laid his hands upon him and baptized him. In this house there is a kind of cell, or very small closet, where, it is said, the apostle passed three days, without sight, and without food. Here, too, it was, we are told, that he had the admirable vision in which he was rapt into the third heaven.

The Straight street (*via recta*) as St. Luke calls it, on occasion of the house of Judas, is still standing entire: it is the principal street of the city, running from one end of it to the other, from east to west. The buildings on either side are almost all shops or warehouses, stocked with the richest commodities, both of Europe and of the different parts of Asia, which are brought thither by the caravans of pilgrims. Dressed, almost all of them, in white, and with studied elegance, the head wrapped in a voluminous turban, which the Damasquin arranges more tastefully than any other Asiatic, the Turkish tradesmen, squatted on their heels before their shops, calmly wait till a customer comes to rouse them from their indolence. Nothing is more curious to the eye of the European, unused to the sight, than the contrast of that long file of black beards, with the white colour of the garments over which they descend.

From the house of Judas we went to another in the same street, about forty paces farther, where Ananias the disciple dwelt, and in which, if we may believe tradition, he was buried. Close at hand is a fountain, from which the water used for baptizing the apostle was brought. This house has been converted into a mosque: we could see only the outside of it.

We went out through the east gate, and when we were beyond the walls, M. Tustet showed me the window, or kind of loophole, from which the Christians, being apprized that the Jews designed to kill St. Paul, and were besetting the gates night and day to prevent his escape, let him down the side of the wall in a basket.

On one of the stones in this wall, I remarked, with extreme surprise, a large fleur-de-lis in relievo. I have not been able to obtain any precise information concerning it.

The cavern where the apostle secreted himself when delivered from his enemies, is near the cemetery of the Christians, at a little distance from the city. It is so small that one can scarcely get into it.

The spot where St. Paul was suddenly surrounded by "a light from heaven," and where "he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" is more than three leagues from Damascus. My guide was perfectly willing to accompany me thither; but I was still too much fatigued with bad nights, and the heat and dust of my journey, to undertake so long an excursion.

After I had inspected these different places, the Catholic churches were what I was most anxious to see. Alas! my friend, I could not pause a moment to consider what this populous city is become, in reference to religion, without sighs bursting from my heart, without tears of grief moistening my eyes. Of the large and magnificent churches which adorned the capital of Syria, formerly so Christian, nought is now left, save deplorable ruins. Those which time has spared, have fallen a prey to the enemies of Christ, and, converted into mosques, they now serve only for the absurd and impious worship established by Mahomet. The Catholics have but the three Latin

monasteries : that of the Franciscan Fathers of the Holy Land, containing eight priests, all Spaniards ; that of the Capuchins, inhabited by a single monk—(the Father who now resides there practises medicine in the short intervals of leisure allowed him by apostolic labours, and has distinguished himself by the introduction of vaccination among a great number of the inhabitants)—and, lastly, the convent of the Lazarists, where I am receiving hospitality. This last house, the most interesting of the three, possesses a very handsome church, the building of which, under a fanatic and extortionate government, could be carried on but very slowly, and was attended with the greatest difficulties. It was effected by the abbé Poussous, superior of the mission, who unites to the higher virtues remarkable courage and extraordinary prudence : it cost him a great deal of money, trouble, and uneasiness. It would be too long to relate to you the disappointments, the vexations, and the obstacles which he encountered in the accomplishment of this work. You may form some idea of them when I tell you that the treachery of one of the masons had nearly been his ruin : he thought himself very fortunate to escape by paying a fine of twelve thousand piasters to the avaricious and fanatic pacha.

Having touched upon the Christian recollections awakened by Damascus, and the few religious establishments existing there, I shall now tell you briefly what I have been able to collect relative to its origin and past condition, and what I have observed of its present state.

Damascus is one of the most ancient cities in the world. The general belief is, that it was built by Hus, son of Aram, and grandson of Shem. Josephus, the historian, tells us so expressly. Hus called it Aram, after his father ; it afterwards received the name of Damascus, from a slave of Abraham's, and steward of his household, who had enlarged and embellished it.

The word Damascus, in Hebrew Dammeseck, signifies, according to the interpreters, *sack of blood.* Some scholars, attaching themselves exclusively to this etymology, have pretended to explain it by an ancient tradition, stating, that it was very near the spot on which Damascus

stands that Cain slew his brother Abel : but there is no evidence whatever of the alleged fact on which their opinion is founded.

Damascus was the capital of Syria and Phœnicia, till the time when Seleucus Nicanor, having caused Antioch to be built, made it the capital of his dominions, that is to say, till the year 301 before Christ. It had not ceased to be tributary to the Jews, till after the death of Solomon. Taken and destroyed several times by the kings of Assyria, it had been rebuilt, and become powerful, when it was taken by the army of Alexander, after his victories over Darius. At the time of the war between the Romans and Tigranes, Pompey sent against it two of his lieutenants, who made themselves masters of it. In the year of Christ 636, it was taken by the Mussulmans commanded by Omar. The caliphs retained peaceful possession of it till the time of the crusades. Attacked by the Christians in 1148, it sustained several assaults, and at length triumphed over their efforts, in consequence of the dissensions prevailing among their chiefs, or, as others allege, through treachery. In 1306, Tamerlane took it from the Saracens, laid it waste, and turned it into a cemetery. Sultan Selim made himself master of it in 1517, and left it to his successors. Ibrahim Pacha, son of the viceroy of Egypt, reduced it in July, 1832.

This city was formerly surrounded by triple walls, and defended by round or square towers, the ruins only of which remain. The new walls, built on the foundations of the ancient, are far less solid : they already show the ravages of time. They form an oblong square, the circuit of which is a league and a half. The gates are eighteen in number: the most ancient is that of St. Paul, Bab-Boulos, by which I entered.

Ancient Damascus, according to the sacred Scriptures, was watered by two rivers, the Abana and the Pharpar. (II Kings, v. 12.) Some conjecture that the Abana is the Orontes ; others that it is the Chrysorroes of the Greeks, and the Barrada of the Mussulmans. Scholars of equal eminence think it right to apply the latter of these denominations to the Pharpar. Perhaps it may not be unreasonable to assume that the Pharpar and the

Abana are but two branches of one and the same river. Leaving these opinions, on the truth of which it is not for me to decide, I shall observe that to the Barrada Damascus chiefly owes the beauty and fertility of its plain. It rises in Mount Lebanon. As I have already taken occasion to remark, it divides into seven branches: these are so many rivers, which irrigate the gardens outside the city, penetrate by means of various canals into those within the walls, supply the baths, which are very numerous, the public fountains, the basins, the citadel; then, uniting again at a little distance from Damascus, flow on in a single stream for a few leagues, when it is lost in a large lake, called, by the Arabs, Behairat-el-Mardi, Sea of the Meadow.

The streets of the city, excepting those contiguous to the seraglio, are in general narrow, and the more filthy because most of them are ill-paved, or rather not paved at all; that in which the Franciscans live was nearly impassable. The good Fathers had it paved, at their own expense, with fine flag-stones. The pacha, being informed of it, had the generosity, remarkable in a Turk, not to order the work to be destroyed; he merely sentenced the convent to pay a fine of forty purses in expiation of this misdemeanor. After rain, in particular, the streets are in a deplorable state: you cannot stir a step without sinking into deep, thick mud; and you may conceive what a condition good clothes or a handsome cloak will be in, if you forget to hold them up.

The houses, built of wood or brick, and plastered with the mud that is used for mortar, have, like all those in Turkey, no windows outside. The door, very like the wicket of a prison, is so low that you are obliged to stoop painfully in order to enter. Everything outside indicates poverty and wretchedness; but, no sooner have you crossed the threshold, than you find yourself transported, as if by enchantment, into a new world. Beyond a small and very dark corridor, you all at once have before you a magnificent court, paved with white marble, adorned with a basin likewise of marble, and crowned by a border of Arabian jasmines, orange, lemon and pomegranate-trees, and fragant flowers. From the

middle of the basin rises a jet-d'eau, which keeps up an agreeable coolness. On the sides are the chambers and the rooms appropriated to the reception of strangers. Sculptures, gilding, mirrors, splendid furniture, rare porcelain, clocks of the most beautiful forms, rich cushions and carpets, in short, the most elegant and exquisite productions with which the progress of the arts can furnish luxury, are there found collected with equal profusion and taste.

Beyond these brilliant apartments many houses have gardens abounding in vegetables, fruit, especially plums, apricots, and delicious grapes. The best sort of grape, I am assured, is that which comes from Dakaia, and the Turks very seriously account for its superior excellence in this manner :—" Mahomet," they say, " was one day playing at chess with God, when he was thirsty and asked for some grapes to refresh him. At the moment when he was laying hold of a grape, some of the stones dropped from his fingers, and, being then precisely over the village of Dakaia, they fell upon a soil which heaven seemed to have prepared for the purpose. The stones, disengaged from their envelope, sprouted, and in time produced the wonderful stock that yields the most exquisite grapes of Damascus." At the distance at which you are, laugh as heartily as you please at this admirable explanation ; but I would advise you to beware of doing so here in the presence of *true believers :* you would pay rather dearly for your irreverence.

The various houses which I have visited, and the magnificence of which I have had occasion to remark, belong to Christians possessing fortunes of not more than a hundred thousand crowns. Those of the Turks, who are more wealthy, far surpass them in grandeur and beauty. To these I could not obtain an introduction : excepting extraordinary cases, none but Mussulmans are admitted into them.

The most considerable of the private buildings are the palaces of the agas. The citadel is a fortress, the extent of which exhibits the appearance of a second town. Its walls are out of repair. The five towers which defend

it, though very ancient, are in good condition : the stones are remarkable for being cut facet-wise.

The bazars and the khans of Damascus are very numerous, and most of them very handsome. Some of them are exclusively appropriated to a particular branch of industry or commerce ; but, in all of them you find in store, or on sale, not only the productions of the country, but also the most costly stuffs of India, and almost all the commodities of Europe. The new bazars are the most magnificent : they are of the most elegant construction, and lighted by dormer-windows. That which appeared to me the most extensive, and the most striking of these edifices, is the khan of Assad Pacha : it reminded me, by its external form, of the Halle-au-Blé at Paris.

Of all the edifices, those most worthy of attention, both for their number and their architecture, are the mosques. They amount to, at least, two hundred ; some of which are very handsome. But wo to the profane wight who should dare to approach one ! but still greater wo if he presumes to enter ! he would atone with his life for the crime of having polluted it by his presence. Whoever is not a Mussulman must not look at it but from a distance. The most remarkable is the mosque which bore the name of St. John Baptist, when it was a Christian church. According to the Damasquins, the head of the saint is still preserved there in a gold dish. There, too, they say, he is buried. The head, according to them, is now shut up in a grotto within the mosque ; and if it is never shown to any one, it is only from a feeling of profound respect.

Till the commencement of the present century, nothing was known concerning the interior of this mosque. The accounts of travellers had stated that it was of Corinthian architecture, surmounted by several domes, the principal of which was called dome of Aliat, and that at the entrance there was a spacious court, surrounded by a piazza. Some pretended that they had been so bold as to observe it from without, on days when the great doors were opened, and asserted that they had seen several columns supporting the vault, and numerous gilt ornaments. In

1803, the Spaniard Badia y Leblich, since so celebrated by the name of Ali Bey, a man profoundly versed in the Arabic language, and thoroughly acquainted with Mussulman usages, set out for the East, charged with a secret mission by Charles IV., and succeeded in passing himself off for a descendant of the Abassides sovereigns. By means of this falsehood, he lulled all suspicion, and was everywhere received with marked distinction. He visited the Mahometan temples, studied in detail the least known points of the religious worship, and, on his return to Europe, published his travels. He had seen the great mosque at Damascus. According to him, it is divided into three parts, four hundred feet long, the arches of which rest on forty-four columns in each row; in the centre, the edifice is surmounted by an immense cupola, supported by four prodigious pillars. At the farther end are two small low galleries, with large korans for the readers; and above, the choir for the chanter. The floor is covered with the most beautiful carpets. On the left of the centre partition, or nave, is a small wooden lodge, with mouldings and ornaments of gold, and arabesque paintings: this is the tomb of John Baptist.

Damascus is every year the rendezvous of the pilgrims from the north of Asia, who there form themselves into caravans to travel to Mecca. They amount sometimes to thirty or forty thousand. Most of them bring with them commodities, which they sell or exchange for those of other countries; hence, for some time before the general departure, there is a bustle, an extraordinary activity, of which our most celebrated fairs in Europe can scarcely convey an idea. The greater part lodge at the great khan, an immense and magnificent edifice, before which there is a spacious court, paved with marble, and in external appearance resembling a monastery. Christians are forbidden to enter it. Formerly, when the caravans set out, they were always headed by the pacha of Damascus, who assumed the title of conductor of the sacred caravan, or emir hadjee, prince pilgrim. Now-a-days a much less exalted personage is frequently its leader.

The population of the city amounts to about one hun-

dred and forty thousand souls, among whom it is computed that there are fifteen thousand Catholics or Maronites, five or six thousand schismatic Greeks, and two thousand Jews, who have three synagogues.

The people of Damascus are accounted the most malignant, the most fanatic, and the most intolerant in the Turkish empire. This disposition of mind is attributed to their intercourse with the pilgrims. It was not without extreme vexation that they saw the late revolution effected by Ibrahim. When the pacha appeared before the city, all rushed forth furiously to meet him, armed to the teeth, with sleeves tucked up, setting up horrid yells, talking of nothing but vengeance and cutting off heads, and sharing the booty among them beforehand: you would have thought that they were going to destroy all before them. The first cannon-shot fired at them put them to the rout: they fled with such precipitation, that, unable to get into the city all at once, they stifled one another at the gates. Their rage is still far from appeased. What most irritates them against Ibrahim, is the equal protection which he grants to the Christians. Happy the latter, to be able to breathe a little more freely, after having been so long under the iron sceptre of their oppressors! But how much is it to be feared that they will some day atone in a cruel manner for the joy which they but too strongly manifested at their deliverance! Some of them, in the transports of their intoxication, went so far as to mimic in public masquerades the departure of the Turkish pilgrims for Mecca. Should the Egyptians not retain their conquest, this indiscretion will be fatal to the Christians: it will cost them tears of blood. God help them in their tribulation!

In telling you about my entry into Damascus, and the Turkish dress which I was obliged to assume, I said that no stranger is seen here attired in the European fashion: I was wrong; I have at last seen one such. He is an Englishman, who distributes Protestant bibles, whether people will have them or not, and who even pays them to buy the books of him.

Farewell, my dear Charles. In two days I shall return to Beyrout, where I intend to embark for the island of

Cyprus, and thence proceed to Egypt. I did purpose, first, to have gone to the ruins of Palmyra; but the execution of this plan, which I had much at heart, depended not on myself: I have met with invincible obstacles. Ibrahim Pacha, having cut off the heads of some of the sheiks of the Maouli tribes, bordering upon those celebrated ruins, there is none who will at this moment undertake to conduct strangers thither. A sheik, who in general accompanies them, sent me word that he would not engage to take me for thirty thousand piasters. The Bedouins are so exasperated that they breathe nothing but blood and vengeance.

LETTER XLV.

Departure from Damascus—Accident in the Valley of the Bekaa—Return to Beyrout—Embarkation for Cyprus—Larnaca—M. de Boutenieff—Departure from Cyprus—Limassol—Coast of Egypt—Fort of Alexandria—View of the City—Chevalier Acerbi, Consul-general of Austria—Monastery of St. Catherine—Pompey's Pillar—Cleopatra's Needles—History of Alexandria—Asses—Environs—Harbour—Wrecks—Mehemet Ali—Audience—Bogos-Joussouf—Firman of the Viceroy, and Letter of Recommendation to the Governor of Cairo.

Alexandria, December 18, 1832.

On the 7th of October, I quitted Damascus, leaving, with regret, the two French priests, from whom I had received such kind hospitality. To me they were friends—brothers; never shall I forget them.

In order to return to Beyrout, I was obliged to take the road which I had already travelled. On reaching the defile, where, with such agreeable surprise, I had beheld for the first time the capital of Syria, I halted to contemplate, to admire, it once more, and to bid it a last farewell.

The journey took us four long days: and the difficulty of the roads across the mountains, and the excessive heat, rendered it extremely arduous. In the valley of the Bekaa, I had like to have lost my baggage; through the awkwardness of my moucro, the ass which carried it fell

and sunk in the mud of a morass. Nothing but the head of the poor beast was to be seen. Had he not possessed great strength he must have perished.

To add to my trouble, the moucro, instead of exerting himself to extricate the animal, was insolent and ill-tempered. I might think myself fortunate, he said, that he had not seen me before he undertook to conduct us. Had he known that I was so rich and so important a personage, he would not have engaged himself for less than four hundred piasters. These murmurs continued for great part of the way. He did not hold his tongue till I declared that, if my religious profession forbade me to give him a lesson myself, for the benefit of other travellers, I would on my arrival acquaint the Austrian consul with his behaviour, and he would cause him to be punished as he deserved.

I hoped to meet M. Lamartine again at Beyrout, but was disappointed: he had set out for Jerusalem.

On the tenth, I embarked for Cyprus, on board the Austrian vessel, the Pianura: after pressing to my heart the kind, the amiable consul, M. Laurella, who, as well as his interesting family, had, during my stay, loaded me with civilities.

At leaving these parts, which I shall never see again, I felt a pang which I cannot express. Jerusalem, the Via Dolorosa, Calvary, the tomb of my Saviour, Bethlehem, Nazareth, their sacred grottoes, all the holy places which I had had the happiness to visit, presented themselves to my imagination. The recollection of them powerfully moved my heart. Plunged into a religious sadness, I could no longer repress my tears and my sighs.

The wind was favourable: in a few hours we lost sight of the coast of Syria. On the following day we anchored at Larnaca. I again beheld that monastery, where, in the preceding year, I had received such a touching welcome; that chamber, in which I had been struck with paralysis: that garden, which was so delightful in the days of my convalescence. I again met the excellent M. Caprara, the consul of Austria, and all

the friends who had shown me such cordial and constant kindness.

Anxious to proceed as speedily as possible to Egypt, where I purposed to pass the winter, I waited impatiently for a vessel to convey me to Alexandria. M. de Boutenieff, brother of the Russian ambassador at Constantinople, a distinguished naval officer, who lost an arm at Navarin, most obligingly offered to take me. He commands a brig of war, which was on the point of sailing; but he was to touch at several ports of Syria, and to stop there. This consideration decided me. I declined his offer with thanks, hoping that I should meet with some vessel that would carry me more speedily to my destination. I was disappointed: M. de Boutenieff arrived three weeks before me.

At length, on the 19th of November, I embarked on board the French brig Eglé et Melanie, captain Terras. The weather was dreadful, the wind contrary. We were obliged to put into Limassol, the Amathonte of the ancients, a small town, situated at the extremity of the island, and which has a good road. We found there several vessels, which, like ourselves, had run in for shelter.

To amuse myself during this delay, I frequently went to walk about on shore. I liked to survey the vessels lying at anchor, and to watch the movements of the numerous boats, carrying on board the various productions of the island, destined principally to be conveyed to the ports of Syria. As the weather still continued foul, our captain, who is an excellent seaman, and whose ship, new and copper-bottomed, had nothing to fear from the gale, determined to weigh anchor. Propelled by the tempest, on the third day after our departure, we descried the whitish, low, and winding coast of Egypt. Soon afterwards we could distinguish Alexandria through a forests of masts, majestically overtopped by those of several three-deckers, one of which carried one hundred and forty guns.

At four in the afternoon we approached the harbour. The entrance is dangerous; it would be imprudent to attempt it without a pilot. Fortunately, the wind abated

a little, and allowed us at six o'clock to come to an anchor. Our vessel was presently surrounded by the various boats belonging to the department of health, the post-office, and the consuls. They inquired from what places we came, and what news we brought. I was apprehensive of a quarantine; but we were assured that in less than twenty-four hours we should have permission to land.

Next morning, at daybreak, I was up, surveying that city, which, at the command of the extraordinary man to whom it is now subject, seems to have acquired a new existence, a new life. By the help of a glass, I could perceive in detail the extreme activity prevailing in the harbour, in the dock-yard, and around the colossus, that 140-gun ship, which is not yet finished. The captain, who was at my elbow, pointed out and obligingly explained to me the objects most worthy of my curiosity. We had before us the palace of the viceroy; that of his son, Ibrahim; the arsenal and the storehouses, magnificent buildings, whose construction surprises the more, because it was executed by Arab architects, and in a very short time; the quarter of the Franks, almost all the houses of which are built in the European style, and have several stories; beyond that, on an eminence, a handsome village and neat habitations; here and there, groves of palm-trees; and, in the distance, that famous pillar, which, in spite of the discoveries of modern science, is still called Pompey's, lifting its lofty top into the air, and serving as a land-mark to ships more than two leagues out at sea.

The promised permission having been brought to us the same day, I went ashore in the consular boat, which M. Acerbi, consul-general of Austria, had kindly sent with his secretary and a janissary to fetch me. I knew him by reputation, and had previously had some correspondence with him. The chevalier Acerbi is an amiable scholar, and a man of the most polished manners. Possessing a magnificent library, and a most beautiful cabinet of natural history, he devotes to the arts and sciences every moment of leisure left him by the duties of his office. He did me the honour to offer me his table, and

an apartment at the consulate. A wish to enjoy more freedom in my religious exercises, and more especially the fear of being indiscreet, caused me to decline both.

I proceeded to the monastery of St. Catharine, belonging to the Franciscan Fathers. It was the 25th of November, precisely the festival of the saint. I arrived in time to attend the service, which was performed with the more pomp because the illustrious virgin, the patroness of the convent, was a native of Alexandria, and had there suffered martyrdom. I was surprised at the number of the congregation, and was told that the persons whom I had seen were not a sixth part of the Catholics dwelling in the city. It is computed that they amount at present to at least twelve thousand, among whom are many Maltese.

On the following day I hastened to take a near view of the famous pillar, which had so forcibly struck me the day before our landing. It stands outside the walls, to the south, on an arid and desert eminence. Its base is a square of about fifteen feet each way; the shaft, of a single piece, is ninety feet high, and nine in diameter; the capital, which surmounts it, is of the Corinthian order, and ten feet high; so that the total height of the column is one hundred and fifteen feet.

We find in the ancient historians nothing that furnishes a clue to the date and the real object of this monument. The appellation given to it by the moderns, and which it still bears, is not justified by any solid reason. Some have assigned its erection to the time of Ptolemy Evergetes; others, supporting themselves upon the authority of Abulfeda, a celebrated Arabian writer, have asserted that it was erected by the Alexandrians, in honour of the emperor Septimus Severus, out of gratitude for favours which he had conferred on them. An inscription discovered in 1801, by three English officers, colonels Leake, Squire, and Hamilton, put an end to all uncertainty. It is as follows:—

"Posidius, prefect of Egypt, erected this pillar in honour of the most magnanimous emperor Diocletian, the tutelar god of Alexandria."

From Pompey's pillar, I directed my course towards

the east side of the new harbour, to inspect Cleopatra's Needles, obelisks of granite, so called after the last scion of the race of Ptolemy, of that queen who has filled the world still more with the renown of her vices than with that of her beauty. One of these obelisks is yet standing on its base ; the other is thrown down, and partly buried in the ground : both are of a single stone, and covered with hieroglyphics. Pliny relates that they were cut by command of king Mespheus, and he gives them a height of forty-two cubits. About the commencement of the eighteenth century, the French consul at Cairo, having obtained permission to measure them, found that their height, including the part of the base buried in the ground, was sixty-three feet; that is precisely the same as Pliny assigns to them, and this fact has been more than once confirmed by subsequent travellers.

But what is the date of these obelisks ? who was this king Mespheus ? This is what I have not been able to learn from men conversant in the science of history. Were not these Needles at Alexandria, as well as in other places, merely ornaments ? or did they, originally as well as in later times, serve by their shadows to mark the seasons and the hours ? or, if they were destined to commemorate the glory of high personages, of kings and queens, with what part of the life of Cleopatra is the erection of them connected ? On all these points I have yet met with nothing but suppositions and conjectures.

Some years since, the viceroy made a present to the king of England of the obelisk which is thrown down, and he carried his liberality so far as to take upon himself the expense of transport. Such an offer could not but be accepted. An engineer was sent from England to take measures for removing the colossus, but it appears that he despaired of succeeding ; at any rate, there the obelisk lies to this day. Sir Robert Wilson says, in his "History of the Expedition of the British Army in Egypt, in 1801 and 1802," that lord Cavan, governor of Alexandria, caused an attempt to be made, for the same purpose, but again without success. What could they

have done then with the obelisk of Luxor, which the French, however, have carried off like a feather!

You will, no doubt, deem it a very rational curiosity which caused me to wish to make myself acquainted, in the first place, with the monuments which I have just mentioned. These, with the port, may be said to be the only ones capable of conveying a notion of what the city must have been in its splendour.

• Alexandria was founded in the year 331 before Christ, by Alexander the Great, on the site of a village called Rachotis, near the sea, at the western mouth of the Nile. After fixing its extent, which was to be ninety-six stadia in circuit, the prince himself prepared the plan of it, and committed its execution to Dinocrates, a celebrated architect, the same who had rebuilt the temple of Ephesus, after it was burned by Erostratus—ports, fountains, canals, aqueducts, cisterns, private houses, baths, squares, theatres, public places for games, palaces, temples—nothing was omitted that could make it one of the first cities in the world for magnitude, the facility of communication with foreign countries, the conveniences of life, and magnificence. Divided into four quarters by two principal streets, one hundred feet wide, which intersected one another; it had in the centre a square much larger than any of the rest, and from which there was a distant view of both harbours. In order to people it the more expeditiously, Alexander attracted thither, by the grant of various privileges, not only his Macedonian subjects, but a considerable number of Jews, and people of all nations.

After his death, Alexandria became the capital of Egypt, and the residence of the Lagidian Ptolemies, who reigned there for nearly three centuries. Under their rule it was enlarged, and attained the highest importance, not only by the prodigious commerce of which it was the centre, but by the protection invariably extended there to learning and to the arts and sciences.

Ptolemy Soter, the first of these princes, founded a sort of academy, by the name of Museon, which has served as a pattern for all the learned societies since formed. He assigned to it a library, which his successors enriched

with all the rare and curious books a knowledge of which reached Egpyt, so that the number of the volumes at length amounted to seven hundred thousand. To these benefits, Ptolemy Philadelphus added the establishment of new schools; he caused the sacred books of the Hebrews to be translated into the Greek language; he employed a skilful architect to build the famous tower of Pharos, as a guide to ships at sea, and which, in subsequent times, gave its name to the light-houses erected for the same purpose. This structure, considered as one of the wonders of the world, rose from a rock on the island to the height of one hundred feet. Its summit commanded a view of forty leagues; it was of white stone, and consisted of several stories, surrounded by galleries, supported by marble pillars.

Pharos was then about seven hundred fathoms from the city, and this space was water. In the sequel it was joined to the continent, by means of a dyke of seven stadia, thence called Heptastadia, and which was gradually enlarged by the successive accumulations of mould between the two harbours.

In the year 47 before Christ, the Alexandrians having refused to acknowledge Julius Cæsar as guardian of young Ptolemy, and umpire between that prince and his sister Cleopatra, who both claimed the throne of their father, the Roman general revenged their resistance with fire and sword, and, after a sanguinary struggle, made himself master of their city. The shipping was set on fire, and the flames, communicating to the quarter called Bruchion, in which were the royal palace and the library, consumed four hundred thousand volumes.

Seventeen years afterwards, Octavius Cæsar, being at war with Antony, passed over to Egypt, marched against his rival, then master of Alexandria, defeated him in a last battle, favoured by the treachery of Cleopatra, entered the city as conqueror, seized the immense wealth of the kings, but forbade his soldiers to plunder private houses, and pardoned the inhabitants, satisfied with having added another province to the Roman dominions.

At the commencement of the Christian era, Alexandria, under the sway of the emperors, more flourishing than

under its own kings, had become the second city in the world, or, indeed, the first in point of commerce. It had not only increased from the influx of its neighbours, but it numbered among its inhabitants Bactrians, Scythians, Persians, whom interests of trade had induced to settle there. Its population amounted to at least seven hundred thousand persons. Each brought thither the creed and the religious worship of his country, so that it exhibited a monstrous medley of the most hideous superstitions.

In the year 60 of Jesus Christ, St. Mark, sent as bishop by the apostle St. Peter, carried thither the light of the gospel, and by his preaching founded there the first and most celebrated of the patriarchal churches. With this church there was soon established a Christian school, against which the greatest geniuses of the idolatrous world struggled in vain. A Panthenes, a Clemens of Alexandria, an Origen, and a multitude of great men in their train, eclipsed the glory of the pagan school by their erudition as well as by their virtues, and left their adversaries no other means of combating them but persecution and martyrdom.

The prosperity of Alexandria was subsequently balanced by cruel reverses. Besieged, taken, laid waste, during the reigns of Claudius, Aurelian, and Diocletian, it passed, in the beginning of the seventh century, from the dominion of Rome under that of the Persians, from whom it was taken in 642, by Amrou, general of the caliph Omar, after it had undergone all the calamities incident to a long siege and an obstinate defence. Amrou, at the solicitation of a philosopher of the time, called John the Grammarian, would gladly have saved that part of the library which had escaped the flames in the wars of Julius Cæsar, and that which the Ptolemies had since formed at a great expense. He durst not venture to grant this favour without consulting the caliph. "If," replied the barbarian, "those books contain nothing but what is in the Koran, they are useless; if they contain what is not there, they are dangerous: they must be destroyed." Upon this answer, the best works on the arts, sciences, philosophy, history, that the genius of man had till then produced, were doomed, without distinction, to

the flames. The books were sent by thousands to the ovens and to the public baths, which they served to heat for six months.

At the time of this invasion by Omar, the population was still immense. The Jews alone amounted to more than forty thousand, paying tribute. Besides private houses, there were four thousand palaces, four thousand baths, and four hundred squares. With the Mussulman sway commenced the decline of Alexandria. The monuments of the arts, the public buildings, the establishments which had constituted the glory of that capital, the very walls and towers which encompassed it, gradually fell to ruin: everything went to decay, everything perished. Before a few centuries had elapsed it became difficult to determine the position of places; and it was easy to foresee that the time was coming, when there would be nothing whereby to recognise them but the aid of science or the vestiges of ruins. At the present day, it is only by means of the accurate descriptions left us by the ancients, that we can assign, at least approximatively, the sites where once stood the theatre, the museum, the stadium, the gymnasium, the temple of Serapis, the hippodrome, &c. With the exception of a few pieces of walls, a few towers, two obelisks, Pompey's pillar, and a very small number of other columns, either whole or broken, barbarism and time have destroyed everything. The Alexandria of the Mussulmans is not the same, even in its site, as that of the Ptolemies. Contracted into a smaller compass, its population decreased from age to age; and the flourishing state which, according to some Arabian writers, it enjoyed in the fourteenth century, exhibits but a shadow of its ancient prosperity.

It would lead me too far, were I to enter into the details of the revolutions and disasters which it has undergone since the time of the crusades. Besieged, taken, and pillaged several times during that interval, it was at length reduced to a population in general poor, wretched, and less numerous than that of most of our small towns in Europe; and, with the exception of

some commerce, destitute of any sort of interest but that derived from its past history and splendour.

In 1798, the French, led by Bonaparte, appeared before its walls, and took it by assault. Restored to Turkey in 1801, it continued to decline. Since it became the possession of Mehemet Ali, it seems to be rising again from its ashes; its population is on the increase, and it is assuming a more cheerful aspect. Trade, shipping, military art, architecture, public buildings, private habitations—all exhibit signs of new life. The immense concourse of native and foreign workmen, in every branch of industry, is not sufficient to satisfy the impatient genius which has communicated this extraordinary movement. You would say that he would fain, like God, create all things with a word.

The European who now visits Alexandria, without knowing anything about it but what he has derived from the older travellers, or even those who wrote twenty years ago, would believe that he was in some other city, if Diocletian's Column and Cleopatra's Needles were not there to apprize him of his error, so great is the change, so prodigious the metamorphosis.

Still, at the sight of most of the streets, narrow, crooked, unpaved, and filthy, of the greater number of houses, or rather huts, ill-built, inconvenient, and without windows outside, of whole quarters still in ruins, peopled solely by paupers and mendicants, you feel that many years, perhaps ages, must elapse before Alexandria assumes the regular aspect of our commercial towns or seaports. In its present state, it exhibits the most extraordinary, nay, even the most hideous, contrasts: it is a confused assemblage of palaces and cabins, a mixture of luxury and poverty, of indolence and activity, of Turkish habits and European manners, which astonish the foreigner. Here, you are amidst the bustle, the din of business or of pleasure; there, all is the silence and solitude of the desert. A man superbly dressed, covered with shawls of great value, walks by the side of a naked wretch; an English chariot, drawn by four magnificent horses, with footmen in laced liveries, is crossing a file of camels driven by squalid Arabs; European ladies,

perfumed, in the most elegant costume, are tripping along by those hideous figures, barefooted, without any other garment than a chemise of blue cloth that is falling to rags, without any other veil than a piece of dirty linen, with which they keep nose and mouth constantly covered, and which leaves nothing exposed but two dull eyes that tell of distress and want; Europeans seated at a sumptuous banquet, singing about liberty—while, at the moment, men are driven along under their windows with sticks—and boys, twelve years old, are dragged with chains about their necks to be made soldiers and sailors against their will; intelligent workmen, under the direction of a skilful architect, erecting monuments which attest and do honour to the progress of the arts; while others are rummaging in the ground, breaking up capitals and shafts of columns, and statues which time has spared, to furnish rough materials for new edifices.

One thing, which appears to me worthy of remark, because I have not met with it elsewhere, is, that at the corner of every street you find asses, well-caparisoned, which boys eagerly offer to those who wish to inspect the city, or to go from one quarter to another, and whom they follow on the run without ever flagging. There are few streets frequented for the sake of trade, in which you do not meet with these animals going and coming almost incessantly: they are the hackney-coaches and the cabriolets of the country.

You will perhaps be surprised that I have not yet told you whether, in a city where Christianity so long flourished, where so many illustrious bishops resided, where so many councils were held, where the number of believers was so considerable, I have been fortunate enough to discover any traces of the magnificent churches in which the mysteries of our faith were celebrated. Alas! with the exception of the church of St. Mark, which looks like a ruin, and that of St. Catherine, belonging to the monastery where I dwell, all have disappeared.

As for the mosques, they are numerous, but there is nothing remarkable about them. That which chiefly attracts the notice of the Christian traveller, is the

mosque of the Seventy; so called because it is built, if we may believe tradition, on the very spot where the seventy interpreters, sent to Ptolemy by Eleazar the high priest, made their translation of the sacred Scriptures.

The environs of Alexandria are dull and barren. After rain, the ground is nothing but mud; in fine weather, it is a dust which the least breeze raises in clouds, and which is very annoying to the eyes. There is no verdure whatever, unless it be that of a few palm-trees, to enjoy whose shade you must toil through the loose sands.

Towards the harbours, the coast is low, full of shoals and reefs, which render it very dangerous. Not a year passes in which there is not reason to regret that a new light-house has not supplied the place of the wonderful pharos, which gave warning to navigators. In the space of eight days, I have seen an English vessel, laden with coal, aground upon a sand-bank, and another, still more unfortunate, actually wrecked. The latter was the Austrian ship, Minos. Captain Crelich, her commander, had been so lucky as to make the trip from Trieste to Alexandria in nine days: and he conceived that he was approaching the term of his voyage, when his vessel struck upon a rock in the harbour.

Among the passengers on board her was M. Schiff, a young man, who had but just been married at Trieste, and who was taking his bride to Alexandria, anxious to introduce her to relatives and friends in that city. Scarcely had the young couple greeted each other with the fond appellations of husband and wife, when they saw themselves in danger of being swallowed up by the same wave. The vessel was shattered; she had lost her rudder, and was gradually sinking, when a bold pilot, at the risk of his life, hastened to her assistance, and, by dint of courage and skill, rescued all on board from the jaws of death. Soon afterwards the wreck was cast upon the beach.

The day after this disastrous accident, in spite of a violent storm, I rode with M. de Babich, chief dragoman of the Austrian consulate, to look at the wreck. Such sights are painful, to be sure: but how eloquently do they

proclaim to us that our days, our months, our years, are hurrying away, after piling themselves upon one another, like clouds, like billows, and that in a few moments more all will be over! On my way from Beyrout to Mount Lebanon, as I have already told you, I saw seven or eight ships which had likewise fallen victims to the treacherous element, and the sight had made a deep impression upon me. But those were the relics of wrecks which had happened several months before, and imagination alone could picture to me their attendant horrors: here I should behold the sad reality. The weather, as I have said, was dreadful: the wind, rain, and hail, beat all at once in our faces. To the roaring of the tempest was added that of the raging sea. The ship lay near the catacombs, that is, the sepulchral caverns of the ancient Necropolis, the city of the dead.

On approaching the shore, we perceived soldiers posted at a certain distance from one another, to prevent the Arabs from stealing the things cast on shore by the waves—a precaution unfortunately needful, but extremely humiliating for humanity! At length, on reaching the beach, we saw the vessel lying on her side, and her masts half destroyed. The furious waves, black, marbled with white foam, dashed confusedly around her; billows, lashed by the violence of the gale, rushed roaring one after another, and at times entirely covered the wreck, falling far around in a shower of spray. A few paces off lay wearing apparel, linen, furniture, cordage, chests, and many other articles, damaged or broken to pieces. I particularly noticed the relics of a magnificent mahogany piano, belonging to M. Schiff. The sight of that instrument served to render the sad spectacle before me still sadder.

Notwithstanding the unfavourable weather, the concourse was great. It consisted of persons in the employ of the Austrian consulate, who had hastened to the spot, either to guard or to assist in saving what might otherwise have been lost; camel-drivers, loading their camels with effects or goods in bales; seamen, in vain seeking among these ruins the few articles belonging to themselves; and lastly, a multitude of curious spectators,

dolefully eyeing this scene of desolation. The captain, pale, dejected, motionless as a statue, kept himself aloof. A circumstance which I could not help remarking with extreme surprise was, that though the Arabs are in the constant habit of bawling, yet among the great number of them present there prevailed a silence as profound as among the other spectators, who were struck dumb by consternation and stupor. In this silence, produced by a great misfortune, there was something extremely sombre and painful.

Mehemet Ali had been apprized, in the first days, of my arrival. I knew that he had spoken of me: I deemed it proper and advantageous to my interests to pay him a visit, especially as I could not prosecute my long journey in his dominions without obtaining a firman, and letters of recommendation for the governors of the provinces, and of Cairo in particular.

Mehemet's is one of those vast but restless and turbulent minds, which Massillon alludes to, "one of those minds capable of enduring anything but repose, which are incessantly turning round the pivot that fixes them, and would rather pull down the building and bury themselves in its ruins than not be doing something, than not be exerting their talents and their strength." The important part which is now playing on the political stage in the East persuades me that, before you read the particulars of the audience to which I was admitted, you will not be displeased to find here an extract from an account of that extraordinary man, recently published:—

"Mehemet or Mohamet-Ali Pacha was born in the year of the Hegira 1182 (1769), at La Cavalla, a town of Rumelia, where his father was an officer of the governor's troops. Though his education was completely neglected, he early manifested an acute and penetrating mind, an active imagination, and an enterprising disposition, which seemed at that time to presage the high destinies to which he has since been called.

"In his youth he had occasion to furnish a proof of his courage and prudence, in bringing back to their duty the inhabitants of a village, who had revolted against

the authorities of La Cavalla; and this action won him the confidence of his superiors.

"A particular circumstance placed him at the head of a corps of three hundred men, which the district of La Cavalla sent to Egypt, by command of the Grand Signor, against the French, who had invaded that country. No sooner had he joined the Ottoman army with his troops, than he attracted notice by the intrepidity of his conduct; and he constantly distinguished himself in the different battles that it fought with the republican armies. After passing through all the ranks, and experiencing all the vicissitudes of the military profession, alternately censured and rewarded by his superiors, he was elected governor of Egypt by a deputation of sheiks, on the 14th of March, 1805. The country was then rent by intestine divisions, kept up by a multitude of tyrants known by the name of Beys or Mamelukes. He resisted them; and, two months after his election, on the 9th of July, 1805, he was confirmed by the Porte in his post of Pacha of Egypt.

"The defeat of the English, at Rosetta, at the time of the disastrous expedition which they attempted in 1807; their expulsion from Egypt; the destruction of the Mamelukes; the wars with the Wahabees; and the conquest of the Hedjaz, Cardofan, and Sennaar, subsequently raised him to the very highest place in the favour and esteem of the Sultan. Unfortunately, Mehemet Ali has persuaded himself that he has conquered Egypt by his sword, and he is bent on retaining possession of it and transmitting it to his heirs: in short, he is determined to found a new dynasty. He combines with great courage the art of commanding. He is endued with a subtile understanding and uncommon penetration. Hence he is acquainted with all the springs of politics, and can move them with skill. He sticks closely to business, and has such perseverance as enabled him to learn to read and write at the age of forty-two. Throughout his whole conduct is seen the restless application of an ambitious man, who is determined to gain a name, no matter at what price. Parsimonious from natural disposition, and prodigal from caprice, he gives only out of ostentation:

hurried away by violence, he is, nevertheless, not destitute of a certain feeling of humanity. He has taken from the grandees the horrible privilege of putting any one to death without trial; he has attached to his cause a great number of the Porte's rebel subjects; he treats them honourably, and never would give them up; lastly, during the insurrection of the Greeks, he took under his protection the Hellenes who were in Egypt, retaining them in their employments, and conferred on them new favours. His demeanour is affable, easy, and prepossessing. Free from prejudice, he can appreciate the European nations, affects to imitate them, and daily censures the grandees of his court for undervaluing them. Ever restless, he sleeps little, and seldom soundly. It is said that he is haunted by the slaughter of the Mamelukes. During the night, two females sit up in turn by his side, to replace the bed-clothes which he is incessantly deranging in his sleep. With his intimates, Mehemet is communicative, inquisitive, and for ever asking questions. His countenance is cheerful and open, and his eye full of fire."

Such is the man whom I was going to see. The chevalier Acerbi, consul-general of Austria, having inquired on what day I might be presented, was informed that his Highness would receive me on the 12th, at four in the afternoon.

We were punctual to the specified hour. We were accompanied by the dragoman and the janissaries of the consulate. I wore the habit of my order, having at my waist my wooden cross, surmounted with a death's head, and my rosary.

The pacha's palace is situated on the little peninsula formed by the ancient Pharos, since it has been joined to the continent. Near it are the offices of state and the barracks; on the left, is a very large building called the Royal Hotel, where the Turks and Arabs of distinction, who come to visit his Highness, lodge. On the same side are magnificent baths, which look towards the sea, then the harem, and, at the extremity of the peninsula, the palace of Ibrahim.

Before you reach this magnificent palace, this superb

hotel, you have to pass before a row of cabins, or rather of enormous holes dug in the ground, in which dwell whole families, men and women, spare and emaciated, surrounded by children, naked and ugly, whose cadaverous hue bespeaks the most abject and disgusting indigence. You imagine, no doubt, that this painful and revolting spectacle has not been placed in vain by Providence at the distance of a few paces from a prince, who cannot stir a step without its meeting his eye; and that, touched by the distress which he is forced to observe, he cannot be more efficaciously urged to relieve it; but you are mistaken: he never bestows a thought on the subject.

Having reached the palace, after ascending a wide and very handsome staircase, on the sides of which were ranged military and civil officers, attendants, and slaves of the prince's, we entered a spacious hall, where we found a number of persons who came to speak to the viceroy, along with some of his officers. As we were expected, we were forthwith ushered into the divan. This is an immense saloon, elegantly fitted up, and around which, along the walls, are placed piles of cushions. Mehemet was seated at one of the angles, on a carpet of cloth of gold; he was smoking his pipe, and talking with the commandant of the place and another person of distinction. These he dismissed as soon as he saw us. We paid our obeisance in the European fashion; he laid his hand upon his heart, and made us a sign to sit down by him, the consul-general on his left, and I on his right. His dragoman was standing in front of him, and the Austrian consul's behind me. As soon as we were seated, coffee was brought to us. Then, in terms of kindness and regard, he opened a conversation which, to the great surprise of his whole court, lasted three hours. There was no end to his questions about Europe, and he appeared to listen to my answers with particular attention. He took pleasure in relating to me the circumstances of his life, in directing my attention to the traits of character by which he thinks that he is distinguished, and which are in fact observable in him; he boasted, in particular, of his prodigious memory, declar-

ing that "he knew but one man in his extensive dominions who really surpassed him in this particular, and that was Ghaly, his minister of the finances."

I had made up my mind, as a matter of prudence, to abstain from all allusion to his struggle with the Sultan: he was the first to advert to that delicate subject. He entered with a sort of complacency into a detail of the "reasons which had forced him," he said, "in spite of himself, into that war, and *had pained his heart exceedingly.*"

In these statements he frequently introduced the name of God, which he never uttered without all the outward marks of deep respect, or without acknowledging his greatness. "Never had he undertaken any action of importance till he had lifted up his heart in prayer to the Almighty, and consulted him;" and while thus talking to me, his head, the beauty of which is heightened by a long, white, bushy beard, assumed a religious attitude; his eyes sparkled; his keen and piercing look was directed upward, and fixed on heaven. Was this genuine Mussulman piety, or did he act thus because he was addressing a monk? you may guess. I shall merely observe that his Highness professes exquisite tact; that he is particularly anxious to gain the good opinion of foreigners, and that I never saw any great personage manifest in a higher degree the appearance of frankness, confidence and ease.

One idea, however, annoyed, tormented, overwhelmed me. "This man," said I to myself, "beside whom thou art sitting, whose garments touch thine, may, without any other motive but sheer whim, cause as many heads to be struck off as he pleases; and neither the widow, nor the aged man, nor the orphan, would dare ask why he has deprived them of a husband, a son, a father"—and then I recollected that this same man, on whose cushions I was sitting, had, in order to secure to himself the supreme power, put to death nearly five hundred persons invited by him to a solemnity, taking advantage of their eagerness to attend it for the purpose of accomplishing their destruction .... and methought I could perceive

spots of blood upon his garments, and the name of TYRANT branded in letters of fire upon his brow.

At times, the civilities which he lavished upon me, the tone of friendship, of confidence, with which he seemed to open his heart, would weaken these painful impressions; nay, I even caught myself saying flattering things to him. Then I was all at once seized with a remorse, which forced me to compose my countenance lest I should betray it.

The prince shows himself an enthusiastic partisan of innovations in politics, in administration, and, above all, in industry. He adopts them with warmth, frequently without reflection or examination He talked a great deal about the plan which he has formed of running steam-carriages between Damascus and Cairo. He purposes to send engineers to survey the route; and if, upon their report, he does not see too many obstacles to the execution of his plan, he will immediately send orders to London for those new carriages, which he is impatient to see in action.

During our conversation, some one came to tell him that the telegraph had just communicated the arrival at Cairo of a courier from Ibrahim in Syria. His countenance assumed, for a moment, a serious look; he appeared to be engrossed by grave thoughts; but presently he resumed the conversation with the same kindliness and the same appearance of cordiality as before.

I must not omit a curious circumstance of this interview—Mehemet Ali not only smokes, like all the Mussulmans, but he is in the habit of taking snuff. Every quarter of an hour, an officer of the chamber enters the divan, and holds before him a gold snuff-box, with all the demonstrations of profound respect. Mehemet takes a pinch; the officer bows in silence, and retires humbly as he came. This ceremony was repeated ten or twelve times in our presence.

When I went to the palace, it was easy for me to perceive, that to all the persons of Mehemet's court I was merely an object of curiosity, to whom not the least mark of honour is due: at my departure, the case was totally different. The long conference, with which I had been

honoured by his Highness, had produced an extraordinary impression. It was thought that the sovereign of Egypt, the powerful Mehemet, could not condescend to talk so long, and especially so familiarly, with a poor European monk, a pitiful Christian; still less were his courtiers able to conceive what he could have talked about. Each had a motive to assign for this extraordinary conference. Some had no doubt that I was an envoy, commissioned to effect a reconciliation between the monarch and the subject. I had become an important personage in the estimation of all: they crowded around me as I passed. I saw the courtiers of Alexandria do for me what I had seen the courtiers of Europe do for so many others: I was loaded with marks of civility, attention, and respect.

On retiring, I called to see M. Bogos-Joussouff, a schismatic Armenian, chief dragoman to Mehemet, and director-general of the department of commerce. He is the prime-minister of his Highness. His power is immense. He governs all Egypt, in some measure, in the name of his master. "After visiting Pharaoh," said I, on introducing myself to him, "I am come to see Joseph." This compliment flattered him the more, because the name Joussouff, which he bears, signifies Joseph. He received me in the kindest manner. He is a man of extraordinary talents, assiduous, active, indefatigable. Mehemet Ali is affectionately attached to him. He has made him his confident, his Mentor, through whom he conducts all affairs of state. He transacts business with him, both night and day, sometimes for three, at others four, or even five hours successively. Still this chief dragoman, this director-general, this minister, this confidant, this Mentor, even though harassed by broken rest, and dying of fatigue, never has heard, and never will hear, these kind words issue from the lips of his master: "Bogos, be seated." Let him that will be the favourite in Egypt, or, indeed, in any other country!

I earnestly requested M. Bogos to have the goodness to remind his Highness of my firman, and the letters of recommendation, which he had promised me for the governors of the different provinces of Egypt; and I re-

tired with the assurance that, very early next morning, my wishes on that head should be fulfilled.

Meanwhile I hastened the preparations for my journey to Mount Sinai, having made up my mind to leave Alexandria as soon as I could set out with safety.

The weather here is terrible. I had heard much about the mildness of the winter in Egypt. In the month that I have passed here, I have not seen one fine day: nothing but rain and severe cold; indeed more severe than I ever felt at Petersburg. There, at least, you can protect yourself from it: here the thing is impossible, no precautions being taken against it.

At length I received the viceroy's firman, with a letter of recommendation for the governor of Cairo. These papers were accompanied with a translation as follows:

"FIRMAN.

"In the name of the Supreme Being,

"The bearer of the present order (*bouyrouldom*) is one of the nobles of Hungary, named Father Marie Joseph de Geramb, a religious traveller, and a personage highly distinguished in the world. His object being to travel, without obstacle and opposition, from Alexandria to Cairo, and thence to Mount Sinai and its environs, by way of Suez, we have been applied to for this order, which has been graciously granted to him. With the aid of the MOST HIGH, no obstacle shall be placed in the way of his travels, and all the assistance due to friendship shall be afforded him when needful. This order, which is addressed to you, and which has been delivered to him, has been issued by us for this purpose.

"In consequence you will conform to its contents, and beware of doing the contrary.

"In the year 1248, the 25th of Regeb."

LETTER FROM MEHEMET ALI TO HIS EXCELLENCY HABIB EFFENDI, INSPECTOR OF THE DIVAN.

"My brother, Habib Effendi, inspector of the divan,

"Our very dear friend, the traveller, one of the nobles of Hungary, Father Marie Joseph de Geramb, wishing to visit Mount Sinai, is just setting out for Cairo. My will

is that you afford him every protection; and, that he may travel safely and quietly, you will direct the sheiks to let him be accompanied by men who shall conduct him to the said place.

"In the year 1248, the 26th of Regeb."

My preparations are completed. To the other kindnesses which he has shown me, the consul-general of Austria has added that of lending me his tent, a thing absolutely necessary in the Desert. He has also had the attention to recommend me in a particular manner to the care of an excellent janissary, who has made numerous journeys, and whom I have taken into my service. This man speaks Turkish, Arabic, and Italian, and he is equally active and courageous. His name is Mahomet. The only thing that annoys me is the show that he makes: he looks like a pacha. By his side I shall appear to be but some poor devil whom his excellency is taking with him in his retinue out of charity. At any rate, it will afford me an excellent opportunity for practising humility.

LETTER XLVI.

Departure from Alexandria—Canal of Mamoudieh—The Nile—Fouah—Dangerous Navigation of the Nile—Arab Fishermen—Distressed Passengers—Wretched State of Egypt—Crew of a Sunken Vessel—Pyramids—Boulak — Cairo — M. Champion, Austrian Vice-Consul—Franciscan Convent—Visit to the Governor and the Minister at War—Visit to the Catholic Clergy.

Cairo, January 16, 1832.

I LEFT Alexandria in the evening of the 6th of January, and embarked on the canal of Mamoudieh. The Austrian chief dragoman had the kindness to accompany me a league from the city. Our bark had two cabins; small, it is true, but tolerably commodious.

The canal of Mamoudieh is a work of Mehemet Ali's. He commenced it in 1820, for the purpose of establishing a communication between Cairo and Alexandria, and gave it the name of the prince whom he is now striving to dethrone. The works undertaken to render it navi-

gable in all seasons have been frequently interrupted; they are not yet completely finished. It is twelve feet deep, and about fifteen leagues in length. One hundred and thirty thousand persons were employed upon it for three years. Neither old men, women, children, were exempted, nor even pregnant women: some were delivered while at work, and others were hurt; but these accidents procured not the least indulgence, excited not the least pity. Most of them had neither mattock nor shovel, nor any other implement to work with, neither was care taken to furnish them with any: the unfortunate creatures were obliged to remove the earth with their hands. Twenty-eight thousand of them perished, owing to the heat, fatigue, or ill usage. The circumstances of cruelty which I have collected from the lips of eye-witnesses make one shudder, my pen refuses to detail them.

The wind being quite favourable, we advanced rapidly. The night was magnificent: a bright moonlight enabled us to distinguish objects as well as in broad day; only, at intervals, the heaps of earth thrown up in digging the bed of the canal, prevented the eye from embracing the whole extent of the prospect. The banks are bare: beyond them are seen a few country-houses, and among others that of Ibrahim.

On the 7th, at nine in the morning, I arrived at Alf, a small port, about five hundred paces from the Nile. Here you land; and here I found a regiment of Hulans, as remarkable for its superb horses and its general appearance as any European regiment. It was going to Alexandria. I had a letter of recommendation for the commandant of Alf, but he was so engaged with the passage of the troops coming from Upper Egypt, that it was impossible for Mahomet, my janissary, to gain admittance to him. I was obliged to bargain myself for a bark, wherein to continue my voyage to Cairo. I could not meet with any but a very large one, with two cabins, and a crew of sixteen men.

While they were carrying my baggage on board, I perceived Mahomet among a crowd of Arabs, violently exerting himself, and assisting a Turk to throw upon the

ground one of the crew of the vessel which had brought me from Alexandria. I hastened to the spot, and soon learned that this man had been caught in the act of stealing two loaves of my store, and that they were going to give him the bastinado. Luckily, I arrived in time: I earnestly solicited the sheik who awarded the punishment to pardon the culprit. He hesitated: I stepped up to him, pointed to heaven, and pronounced the word *Allah!* He laid his hand upon his heart, and immediately set at liberty the poor Arab, who, still trembling with fear, appeared quite stupified on seeing that it was to the person whom he had wronged that he was indebted for his pardon.

At length, my eyes beheld the "king of rivers," the river which no traveller has approached without a strong feeling of curiosity, of which none has spoken with indifference—the Nile. I embarked immediately. The shore was covered with small craft, full of soldiers. We had great difficulty to get clear of it. On reaching the middle of the stream, we found the wind so contrary that we were obliged to steer for Fouah, on the opposite bank, and there lie-to till the following day.

Fouah is a small town, to which a staple traffic gave some importance not two centuries ago. Since that time it has been continually declining. It is very ill-built. Most of its houses are mere huts. Here are to be seen some manufactories of Egyptian caps, called *tarbouches*. The mosques are almost the only buildings that indicate its former prosperity.

On the 8th, the wind had not shifted. It was impossible for us to get away. I spent part of the night in reading and writing. The clamorous and incessant chatter of the crew annoyed me: at last I contrived to silence it. From time to time I left my cabin to admire the serene sky of Egypt, to contemplate the river and its beautiful banks, tinged by the soft light of the moon. I could not reflect without lively joy, that this land through which I was travelling had been visited by my Saviour; that thither he had been carried by Joseph, agreeably to the injunction of the angel:—"Take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there

until I bring thee word" (Matt. ii. 13); and that then, according to the interpretation of the Fathers, was fulfilled this prophecy of Isaiah:—"The Lord shall come into Egypt, and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence." (Is. xix. 1.)

As the climate is intensely hot, and it scarcely ever rains there, Egypt would be absolutely sterile and uninhabitable but for the Nile: hence there is no river whose benefits are more justly appreciated. The Egyptians cannot find expressions strong enough to praise it as it deserves: with them the Nile is the good, the blessed, the holy, the abundant, the gift of God, the sacred. They are sensible, and they take delight in acknowledging on all occasions, that to it they are indebted for everything. Its waters vivify the tracts over which they spread; they fertilize the soil, not only of themselves, but also by means of the mud which they bring with them, and which they leave on retiring; distributed in an infinity of channels which man has opened for them, they supply him, as well as the animals around him, with the drink which they need; they irrigate his gardens and his fields; they soften and prepare ground to receive the seed, and spare the husbandman the labour of tracing with the plough the furrow to which it is to be consigned.

The periodical rise of the Nile, on which the existence and prosperity of Egypt depend, takes place every year, about the 20th of June. In the middle of the following month, the waters begin to overflow; and they keep gradually swelling till they have inundated the whole country. In the last days of September they subside, but very slowly, and it is not till the approach of November that they have quite retired within their bed; which has caused certain writers, who overlook slight differences, to assert that they take the same time to increase as to subside. Meanwhile, Egypt is like a vast sea, from amidst which rise towns and villages, all built on ground so high as to run no risk of being overflowed.

It is by the height of the inundation that a judgment is formed of the fertility or unproductiveness of the following year. When it has risen sixteen Egyptian ells,

it has reached the most favourable point. This happy event is immediately proclaimed by the cry :—"God hath granted us abundance," which is heard everywhere. Egypt then gives itself up to joy, and celebrates its good fortune by extraordinary festivities. It was the same in the time of the ancients, who considered a rise of sixteen cubits as an infallible sign of a plentiful crop. "Below that," says Pliny "there is not sufficient water to irrigate all the land ; above it, the water would take too much time to retire."

The degrees of elevation are marked annually upon a pillar in one of the mosques at Cairo. Before the Christian era, they were noted upon a similar column in the temple of the god Serapis, to whose bounty Egyptian credulity attributed the favour of the inundation. At the time when the gospel was first preached, the princes, in order to deter their subjects from embracing the Christian faith, threatened them with the wrath of the god, who, they said, would revenge himself by dooming their country to drought and sterility. The Christians multiplied, nevertheless; and at length they carried away the pillar of Serapis from the temple, and removed it to their church in Alexandria, and the vengeance of God is yet to come.

Among such of the ancients as investigated the causes of the periodical inundation of the Nile, several conjectured that it was owing to the abundant rains which fall in Ethiopia, from the month of May till the month of September. This is a fact which at the present day no one doubts : it is confirmed by the observations and the unanimous testimony of all travellers.

In Upper Egypt the Nile runs in a single bed, between two chains of mountains, separated by a valley, narrow in some places, and from four to five leagues wide in others. At some distance from Cairo, it divides into several branches ; the two most considerable of which form, with the Mediterranean, an immense triangle, called the Delta, from its resemblance to the Greek letter of that name. The tract comprised between the three lines of this triangle is the most fertile of the whole country ; this is Lower Egypt.

The wind having become favourable, we started from Fouah at five in the morning. Our vessel cleaved the water with the swiftness of lightning, but we were not free from apprehension. The navigation of the Nile is attended with great danger, and accidents are frequent. Without great care, you run the risk of being caught by whirlwinds, the violence of which is the more liable to capsize vessels, because they carry a mast of greatly disproportionate height, and to which an immense lateen sail is attached. Mehemet Ali and his son, Ibrahim, had more than once well-nigh perished in this manner. These barks, here called *canges*, are long but not strong vessels, looking like Venetian gondolas on a large scale, with this difference, that the cabin, instead of being in the middle, as in the latter, is below.

In the course of the day, I saw some Arab fishermen, too poor to provide themselves with a boat, who had tied together a great quantity of dry and empty gourds, and, having laid upon them a few wretched planks, committed themselves to the caprice of the waves on this frail raft, thus risking their lives for the sake of catching a few fish.

The favourable wind, which had carried us forward a great way, shifted at sunset. We brought-to at Eafreseath, to pass the night there.

Eafreseath is a village, which, like all those that are met with on the banks of the Nile, has nothing agreeable but its situation. It is an assemblage of wretched mud huts, which you would rather take for the dens of wild beasts than the dwellings of human beings. In the centre stands a tolerably well-built mosque, surmounted by a minaret of beautiful workmanship, and extremely white, which, by the contrast, renders the aspect of the huts so much the more hideous. Around it are numerous palm-trees, whose lofty foliage seems disposed to hide such abject wretchedness from view. This village has a port. It is one of the greatest staples for corn belonging to the pacha.

On the 9th, before daybreak, I was suddenly roused from sleep by sobs and cries, which seemed to proceed from the very bark in which I lay. Persuaded that, con-

trary to my express prohibition, the master had admitted strangers, I had thoughts of going instantly to reproach him with this violation of my orders; but, fatigued with the voyage and preceding vigils, I fell asleep again. Scarcely had I closed my eyes, however, when I was again wakened by fresh clamours. I rose in haste, and no sooner was I out of my cabin, than I discovered that the noise which I had heard proceeded from a neighbouring cange. Wretched mothers, with their daughters, some of them holding young infants in their arms, were overwhelmed with affliction; and it was their lamentations, their moans, which had disturbed my slumbers. They came from Cairo, and were going to Alexandria, to their husbands, their sons, their brothers, who a few days before had been conveyed thither in chains to be incorporated in Ibrahim's army. They were going to bid them a farewell, which for many of them would probably be the last. The night was extremely cold; they had passed it in a miserable open boat, without any other protection than the rags which covered their nakedness. Such as had children pressed them to their bosoms to warm their chilled limbs. To add to their wretchedness, these poor creatures were suffering the pangs of hunger: their bread was exhausted. One of them had seen her three eldest sons torn from her; and she was dragging along with her four young children. She was deficient fourteen sous only to pay their passage, and the master had inhumanly taken from her a bundle of mean clothing with which she defended those innocent creatures from the severity of the weather. I do not recollect to have witnessed in all my life a more distressing scene. Fortunately, there was one at hand who relieved them. The fare of the unhappy mother was paid, and a few baskets of bread were carried on board to appease the hunger of the famishing passengers. But, even then, what pain was it not to me to see all those eyes, dim with grief, fixed sorrowfully on the piece that was thrown to them, and those hands lifted to grasp it, and that eagerness with which it was devoured! O, my friend! how I wished that I could have assembled the wealthy of the world around that bark, to make them witnesses of

this melancholy scene! For a few moments, at least, sighs and complaints were interrupted by the blessings of gratitude. A few minutes afterwards the bark proceeded on her voyage.

During the day, the wind was constantly favourable. We passed a long file of boats laden with bales of cotton, which, piled one upon another, looked, as they approached us, like floating islands, or rather hills. The villages, more numerous, and not less happily situated than those which we had previously seen, the rich and fertile lands around them, the banks, most commonly bordered by sycamore, citron, and palm-trees, presented enchanting views. One thing alone was wanting to complete the beauty of the scene: the water of the great river has neither the transparency nor the azure of most of our European rivers. Yellow and turbid, it thus breaks, if I may be allowed the expression, the harmony of the prospect. It is so muddy that, for several months in the year, people cannot drink it till it has stood to settle. They clarify it more speedily by rubbing the vessel in which it is kept with bitter almonds. This is a precaution, however, which I dispense with; and, nevertheless, I find it not only wholesome but delicious, and so suitable to my stomach that I have renounced every other beverage.

At ten in the evening we arrived at Nadir, a small, mean village, the mosque of which is falling to ruin.

Next morning, as soon as it was light, I went to take a walk in the environs. I stopped to look closely at the channels which convey the water of the river to the adjacent lands. I found them in a very bad state, but I was struck by the astonishing fertility of the soil. Nowhere can vegetation be more vigorous, more active; and yet, along with this prodigious fecundity, what indigence! If I relate to you what I have seen, will you believe me?

In this country, so highly favoured by Nature, there are married couples who have between them but a single garment, a sort of shirt of blue cloth, coarse, and filthy. When one is obliged to go out, he or she puts it on, leaving the other lying in the straw, or hiding in a corner of the wretched hut. Naked children are running to and

fro: they accost you without shame, without appearing to suspect that there is such a thing as modesty; and in this state they talk to you, annoy you, and ask your charity. The plentiful, the prodigious crops, with which bounteous heaven covers this land, belonging not to those who raise them with the sweat of their brow, no part of the produce is their's. I have seen these miserable creatures grubbing about here and there for food, like animals, brousing the grass as they do, and deeming themselves fortunate if they can thus appease the cravings of hunger unmolested. There is now but a single proprietor in the whole country—Mehemet Ali. He has seized everything; he disposes of everything—men, women, children, life, money, goods, are all at the mercy of his despotism, and must all subserve, when he pleases, and how he pleases, to his gigantic projects. Little does he care for the misery of those whom his tyranny oppresses; he sees it with dry eyes. He looks coldly, without pity, without remorse, at the multitude of wretched creatures, of widows, of orphans, that he has made. Wealth, power—those are his gods, and to them he sacrifices innumerable victims.

As I was returning on board, my janissary directed my attention to four sailors, sadly sitting on the bank, and with their hands covering their faces to hide their tears. They belonged to a vessel bound from Cairo to Alexandria, with a cargo of gum-arabic and saltpetre, which had sunk the day before. Nothing was saved, and two of their comrades had gone to the bottom with the vessel. A plank, luckily detached from the bark, had alone preserved them from the like fate.

The wind, during the whole day, was extremely variable. The Nile, whose course now becomes winding, presented to the view nought but sterile banks, entirely destitute of verdure. On the side next to the Desert, on a bare eminence, we perceived very near to us the village of Monischabé, peopled by Bedouin Arabs. The ground, the houses, the very inhabitants, whom we could easily distinguish, were all of one uniform sombre and blackish colour. The number of villages like this, inhabited by Bedouins, was formerly considerable on the Lybian bank.

As they were the haunts of very clever and very wily robbers, who never left them but to fall unawares upon vessels ascending or descending the river, plundering them and hiding their booty in the sands of the Desert. Mehemet has destroyed several of them ; but enough are still left to alarm travellers, and to keep them upon their guard, especially during the night.

We were not more than twelve leagues from the capital. As we advanced, I saw less, I scarcely observed what was close to me ; my thoughts, my eyes, were directed towards Cairo ; they were seeking the pyramids. "Be easy," said Mahomet, my janissary, twenty times in the course of the day ; "do not fatigue yourself with trying to discover them : I will show them to you at the moment when you will least suspect that they are in sight." And he occupied himself about something else in the cange, merely looking out ahead now and then, and saying to me, with the air of a man perfectly sure of his point : "All in good time ; have patience ; we are not there yet." My eyes, nevertheless, gazed intently in the direction in which the wonder of Egypt must at last make its appearance. All at once, I discerned what appeared to be the points of two or three triangles shooting up into the sky. "There they are ! there they are !" I exclaimed : "Mahomet, there they are !"— and poor Mahomet ran to me, confused and disconcerted at not having been the first to discover and point out to me objects with which he was so familiar. He should certainly have seen them before me, he said, if, by an unlucky accident, he had not been detained elsewhere. I refrained from contradicting him : it would only have aggravated his mortification.

It was not long that I enjoyed the sight which I had been so impatient to gain : night approached, dropping her veil, as if out of jealousy, to deprive me of it. We arrived very late at the little village of Gurciss, and there stopped.

On the following morning, I was stirring, as usual, by daybreak. As a dead calm prevented us from starting, I took a survey of the environs, and directed my course towards a grove of palm-trees, with the intentión of

walking about in it while reciting the service of the day.

Scarcely had I reached it, when a countless multitude of ravens sallied forth, and with furious croaking rushed upon me to prevent my entry. This host was so considerable as to darken the air. To no purpose I strove to drive them away: so far from being scared by any effort that I made, they pursued me without intermission, till they had fairly forced me to retreat. Having never before observed anything of the kind, I suspected that they might have nests in the palm-trees, and I attributed the courage, or rather the animosity to which I had been obliged to yield, to that instinct of affection for their young which Providence has implanted in all living creatures. What a difference, by-the-by, between these birds and the other species that may be remarked in the short voyage upon the Nile! To say nothing of the aquatic birds, the wild-ducks, geese, swans, cranes, &c., several of which at times escort the traveller, and are fond of getting near him, as if to give him an opportunity of admiring them, thousands of others, of all sorts, come wheeling and sporting about the canges, even settling upon them, and charming the passengers by their familiarity and their lays. Among these various species, the European observes, not without a lively feeling of pleasure, some of those of his own country: the sparrow, the wagtail, which alight upon his table, pick up the crumbs, and, I might almost say, touch his hand, glad, as it were, to renew acquaintance, to see at least a compatriot, who, in distant lands, is always a friend.

The wind afterwards shifted, and the master summoned us on board. The banks of the Nile were still sterile. On the right we had the chain of mountains which separates Egypt from Lybia, and in front Mount Mokatan, placed as if for a dyke to stop the burning sands which the winds sometimes drive before them, and to prevent them from parching, or even burying, the rich vegetation of Egypt. My eyes were speedily fixed again the pyramids.

At the distance at which we were, they looked exactly like those lofty mountains whose creation is the work of

the Almighty. Their bases, like those of the hills, seemed to be rooted in the bowels of the earth, and their lofty summits were lost in the clouds: but I was aware that they were erected only at the despotic command of bad kings, and by the enforced labour of an enslaved and oppressed people. In spite of my admiration of the work, I was painfully affected; I felt more forcibly than ever how much there is that is petty, pitiful, humiliating, in the most gigantic undertakings of pride. These so celebrated monuments, these monuments, the most durable, without the least doubt, of all those by which men have wished to display their power and their greatness, in which they have striven, as it were, to rival Nature, to rival God himself—what have they proclaimed, what do they proclaim, to successive generations, but the crimes, the injustice, the follies, the worthlessness, the nothingness, of their authors? These prodigious masses of enormous stones, what are they, after all? Tombs, and what tombs? Empty tombs, in which not even the mighty ones who prepared them for their last abode have rested. Impious kings, oppressors of their subjects, enemies of the gods, objects of universal hatred and execration, obliged to take the most secret precautions to withdraw their bodies from the public judgment, which they foresaw must deprive them of the honours of sepulture—princesses dishonoured by the infamy of their lives—such are the recollections awakened by the most magnificent pyramids. Instead of the glory which they had anticipated from them, those by whose order they were constructed could not even carry with them at their death the miserable consolation of saying that they had at least a sepulchre left.

Such were my meditations, the while our bark was rapidly approaching its destination. Towards evening we made a halt of two hours only, after which, impatient to arrive, I gave orders for resuming our route.

Next morning, at six o'clock, the capital of Egypt lay before us. I was already rejoicing at having reached it, when a sudden and violent gust of wind met our vessel, broke the rudder, and drove us to the opposite bank. I immediately threw myself, with Mahomet, into a small

boat, and, by dint of rowing, in half an hour we landed at Boulak, which adjoins Cairo and its harbour.

As soon as we were on shore, Mahomet hastened, by my order, to hire asses for me and himself; for here, as at Alexandria, those animals supply the place of hackney-coaches and cabriolets: and there was he, carrying his thick cane with large silver head in his hand, going before me, commanding the people to make room, in spite of my prohibition, striking, right and left, at any one who did not get out of the way expeditiously enough, and conducting me in a gallop to the Austrian consulate.

M. Champion, our vice-consul, being already apprized of my arrival, was waiting for me. He gave me the most cordial welcome; and, to the other civilities which he lavished upon me, he added the favour of taking me himself to the convent of the Franciscan Fathers of the Holy Land; and he did not leave me till he had expressed an earnest desire to render me any service in his power. The next day I availed myself of this obliging offer.

Accompanied by the vice-consul, the chancellor, the dragomans, and the Janissary, I paid a visit of etiquette to the governor, and delivered to him the letter of recommendation given me by the viceroy. We then called on the minister at war. I was everywhere received with marked distinction.

On my return to the monastery, I there found the Greek Catholic bishop, the Coptic Catholic bishop, the Franciscan missionaries of the Reform, and the Catholic, Coptic, Armenian, and Greek clergy, waiting for me. On this, more than on any ordinary occasion, I regretted that I could not converse but through the medium of an interpreter. This visit was full of civilities, but very short, like all visits of ceremony. I foresee that for some days I shall have a certain number to receive and to pay, and that, with the occupations indispensable in my position, I shall not so soon be master of my time. Hence I know not when I may be able to resume my pen.

LETTER XLVII.

Cairo—Description of the City—Abdallah Pacha.

Cairo, January 25th, 1833.

I RETURN to you, my dear friend, sooner than I hoped at the moment when I was finishing my last letter. Business, and the first perplexities with which I found myself beset, made me fear that I should be obliged to defer the pleasure of writing to you much longer. Luckily, I have been able to dispose of all indispensable matters in a few days; and, this task performed, I began as usual to run about, to see, to observe, to question, to pick up the observations of others, and now I hasten to transmit to you at least part of the result.

The capital of Egypt is not called by the Arabs *El Kahira*, the Victorious, the name given to it by its founder. They commonly call it Masr, which some take to be derived from the first syllable of Misraim (Egypt), and which, according to others, signifies the Beautiful Place. The Arabs likewise name it Omm el Dounya, mother of the world, great among the great, delight of the imagination, smile of the Prophet. It is situated on the right bank of the Nile, with which it communicates by means of a canal. It is composed of three totally distinct parts, about half a league asunder—Boulak to the south, Old Cairo to the east, and Cairo, properly so called, or Grand Cairo, to the north of Boulak.

Boulak, considered as a suburb of Cairo, is its principal port: it forms a separate town. It was built in the first century of the Hegira. Its population, small before the usurpation of Mehemet Ali, has since risen to more than eighteen thousand souls, and is fast increasing every day. It contains some very handsome new buildings, mostly in the European style: they have been erected by the command and at the expense of the viceroy. Among them are the custom-house, the Arabic printing-office, a college, baths, manufactories, and a superb cannon-foundry.

Old Cairo, according to some historians, dates from a

period anterior to Cambyses, that is to say, earlier than the fifth century before Christ. It is, according to them, the ancient Egyptian Babylon. The discussion of this opinion would be foreign to the subject of these letters: if it be true, we must conclude that Amrou, Omar's general, to whom other writers attribute the foundation of Old Cairo by the name of Fostat, only rebuilt the city. It forms a second port.

Cairo, properly so called, or Grand Cairo, stands in a sandy plain. According to the plan of it, drawn about the middle of last century by Niebuhr, this city, with the other two parts, which are commonly comprehended in one general name, is at least three leagues in circumference. But the ground comprised within that compass is by no means like that of our great European cities, entirely covered with buildings, streets, and public places. Besides numerous and extensive gardens, you remark many vacant spaces, and a great quantity of ruins. These, owing to the animation imparted to the city, are disappearing at several points, to make room for the buildings and embellishments which the activity of the viceroy delights in creating.

In coming from Boulak—where, as I told you, we landed—Cairo, which, when seen from any other side, exhibits a cheerful and pleasing aspect, appeared to be but a confused mass of brick walls and houses, among which we could not even distinguish any public buildings civil or religious, which, on the approach to great cities, in general strike the eye at a distance, either by their form or their elevation. This was to us a subject of no small surprise. But what astonished me much more was, that almost countless multitude of unpaved, narrow, irregular, crooked streets, which seem to have no outlet, such as I have not remarked elsewhere since I have been in the East. There are some through which a man on horseback can scarcely pass. The broadest are those where persons of a certain rank reside, and those of the markets; these it is necessary to cover over-head, to screen them from the sun, whose heat is insupportable. Some are almost deserted, others extremely populous, and the latter are most numerous. The crowd in them

is immense, pushing, pressing, rushing, like the waves of the sea. It is difficult to get through it. When I go out, a janissary precedes me with uplifted cane; and it requires all his threats and the utmost efforts of his lungs to clear a passage for me. Harems, under the care of eunuchs, files of camels heavily laden, piquets of soldiers going to relieve guard, high personages on horseback or on mules, persons of all conditions on asses, are incessantly meeting, crossing, gliding past each other, and, most extraordinary! all threading their way, with more or less speed, without collision, without accident, even in places which appear to be completely blocked up by the multitude. Persons who are not on foot are always attended by *saïs*, a sort of grooms, whose duty it is to make way for their employer, and to hold the animal that he rides when he alights, and stops anywhere. With the incessant cries kept up by these *saïs* of "Room there!" which ring on every side, are mingled those of children, whom their mothers are carrying in their arms or on their shoulders, those of dealers offering their wares, those of the many blind people who jostle you, the braying of asses, the barking of dogs, producing together a din to which any ear that is not Egyptian can scarcely get accustomed.

The streets of Cairo are divided into fifty-five quarters, which are shut in by gates. Several of these quarters are designated only by the name of those by whom they are inhabited, as the quarter of the Franks, that of the Greeks, the Copts, the Jews. This last is the worst built and the filthiest. In each of them you meet with numerous water-troughs for animals, and several cisterns for the supply of the population; but the water is in general bad, and has a disagreeable taste; so that it is only the poor, or passengers pressed by thirst, that fetch or drink of it. People in general prefer drinking the Nile water, which is fetched from the river in skins.

According to Father Sicard, a celebrated Jesuit, who died at Cairo about the beginning of the last century, there was at that time in the city but one large square, that of Roumelyeh: there are now four, remarkable for

their extent, exclusively of a much greater number of small ones.

The houses differ from those which I have seen in other cities of the East, in being most of them two, and even three, stories high. As they have very low doors, and no windows next the street, nothing is to be seen but high naked walls, which give them a duller appearance than that of a prison. Most of them are of brick. Ill built and worse arranged, they are generally inconvenient, with the exception, however, of those of wealthy people, and the palaces of persons holding offices and dignities; but even these exhibit no external indications of grandeur and magnificence. Luxury and decorations are reserved exclusively for the interior, and for the courts, several of which are paved with marble, and adorned with basins, from the centre of which rise fountains, that, while they adorn, keep them at the same time refreshingly cool.

The mosques, in general, are distinguished, from the other public buildings by the regularity and elegance of their construction. They are very numerous. According to the accounts of older travellers, they amounted, a century ago, to seven hundred and twenty. I know not whether there is any mistake in the number; the moderns reckon no more than four hundred, including large and small.

I should be tedious were I to attempt to describe the baths, the bazars, the warehouses for merchandize, and were I to add an account of all that has been done of late; suffice it, therefore, to observe, that those who have not seen the capital of Egypt for the last twenty years would scarcely know it again; not merely on account of the new buildings, the new palaces, the new manufactories, the new schools, the new establishments, the new administration, in short, the material changes which have intervened; but principally on account of the revolution which has taken place in manners and customs, but especially in the intercourse with, and treatment of, foreigners. Thirty years ago, a European would not have shown himself at Cairo in the dress of his country, without exposing himself to insult and ill-treatment. If, when on horseback, he had met a Turk of distinction, he would have been obliged

to alight, and to endure abuse and scorn patiently and without a reply.

More recently, as the wife of the Prussian consul was passing a coffee-house with her daughter, a Turk, rushing from it like a madman, fired a pistol at the latter, and killed her in the arms of her mother. This murder struck terror into the Europeans residing in the city, and not one of them durst call for vengeance. The murderer, it is true, was punished; he was hanged: but justice was done solely because the unfortunate victim belonged to a man who represented his sovereign at Cairo: but for this particular circumstance, he might have boasted of his crime with impunity. Now-a-days, so far from this being the case, the slightest insult, any offensive expression used in public against a Frank, would draw down upon the culprit a chastisement equally prompt and severe; or, to speak more correctly, no Mussulman subject of the viceroy's would dare to deserve it. There was a time when it would have been deemed a sacrilege worthy of death for a foreign woman to appear in a turban of a green colour, which, as you know, is the colour of the Prophet. Well, I have seen at Cairo elegant ladies, dressed in the French fashion, with green turbans, walking in the most frequented quarters of the city, just as quietly as they might have done in London, or Vienna, while not a creature seemed to take offence at it. At this moment a European enjoys greater liberty in Egypt than anywhere else.

Much has been written, and different opinions are entertained respecting the population of Cairo: it is impossible to form any precise estimate of it. The present sultan himself is not acquainted with it. Nothing but a census could settle the point: he ordered the pacha to cause a census to be taken, but was not obeyed. At the time of the French expedition under Bonaparte, this operation was undertaken; but it was, of course, inaccurate, because those by whom it was performed took no account of the slaves and the harems. In a note from generals Gubbeau and Duranteau to Dr. Desgenettes, it is stated that the number of inhabitants in Grand Cairo amounted to three hundred thousand, exclusively of those

in the citadel, Old Cairo, and Boulak. Persons whom I have every reason to consider as well informed as any one can be, in a country where no register of births, marriages, and deaths, is kept, have assured me that the total population of the three divisions of the city is at this present time about five hundred thousand souls; and, if we compare the former state of Cairo with its present increase, we shall be forced to admit that this calculation, if not strictly accurate, at least approaches nearest to the truth.

I left Alexandria with the intention of visiting at Cairo the too famous Abdallah Pacha, Mehemet Ali's prisoner, and I had previously ascertained that the new government would not take umbrage if I did so. Far from me was the idea of wishing, or appearing to insult misfortune, well as it might be deserved; but, independently of the curiosity natural on such occasions, the sight of a man whose name had rung throughout Europe, who yet passed with some for a hero, atoning in captivity for his sanguinary despotism, and for the unworthy cowardice by which he had consummated his ruin, was not to my thinking a spectacle destitute of interest and instruction. Once master of Palestine, and of the pachalik, whose capital he defended, Abdallah had with a nod disposed of the lives of the inhabitants; he had taken advantage of the darkness of night to assassinate his benefactor; he had, from the ramparts of Acre, defied the arms of his enemy, and had laughed at his threats: in short, he had shown himself ferocious, cruel, ungrateful, insolent, in the days of his prosperity; afterwards, at the first trials of adversity, abandoning the defence of the place to the courage of the valiant garrison, he had disgracefully hid himself in his harem. More disgracefully still, after begging his life and obtaining permission to appear before his conqueror, he had crowned his humiliation by lavishing on Ibrahim the names of saviour and father, and by servilely prostrating himself at his feet, to kiss his boot in testimony of gratitude. Such was the man whom I desired to see.

But, before I give you the particulars of my visit, you will not be displeased to learn how Abdallah was received

at Alexandria by Mehemet Ali, at the time of his landing. I subjoin a translation of the Italian bulletin, published on that occasion, and dated June 5th, 1832.

"While Egypt, in the intoxication of the joy caused by the first intelligence of the reduction of Acre, taken by assault, and the submission of Abdallah Pacha, who had fallen into the hands of the conqueror, was anxiously awaiting the details of the achievement of the 27th of May last, a ship of war, belonging to his Highness the viceroy, appeared on the 2d of June, at four in the afternoon, in sight of Alexandria, making known by her signals that she had on board a person of distinction, and firing guns at intervals as she approached. A boat was immediately despatched from the port to reconnoitre the ship, and to learn the object of her mission.

"His Highness was at the naval arsenal. No sooner was the rumour circulated that the vessel was bringing the valiant Abdallah Pacha, than the eyes and the attention of the Alexandrians were fixed upon it. They could not, however, be sure of the arrival of Abdallah till the return of the boat; as there was reason to conjecture that she had on board an envoy from the camp of Acre, despatched at the same time as the first courier who had brought the news of the taking of that place.

"The boat having approached the ship, the messenger under whose orders it was had a short conference with the captain, and immediately returned to the arsenal, where his Highness still was, and informed him that the ship was bringing Abdallah Pacha, with his kiaya (lieutenant).

"His Highness inquired after their health; and learning that Abdallah, who was a stranger to the great soul of the viceroy, was extremely uneasy, he immediately sent his own boat to fetch him, with directions to take him as well as his kiaya to the palace, whither he immediately repaired.

"As soon as he reached the staircase, his Highness despatched in the boat which had brought him to the arsenal Kengi Osman, paymaster-general of the navy, an acquaintance of Abdallah's, ordering him to go to meet him, to comfort him, and to assure him of the

generosity of the viceroy. Mehemet Ali then proceeded with his retinue to the hall of the divan, and placed himself in the corner where he usually sits. On his august countenance was remarked the expression of profound grief arising from compassion. He was a quarter of an hour without uttering a word; then breaking silence, he said: 'I have been told that Abdallah is overwhelmed with fear, and I wish to comfort him. In consequence, and for this time only, dispensing with the strictness of the quarantine, I direct pratique to be given to this guest, that I may the sooner ease his agitated spirit.'

"Abdallah arrived at sunset. At the moment of stepping on shore with his kiaya, he was complimented by some officers, who accompanied him at a slow pace to the palace. He walked with drooping head; and both his features and his demeanour showed great dejection. He is a spare man, of the ordinary stature; his beard is short, and of a chesnut-brown; his eyes are animated, and his countenance fierce. He is about thirty-five. A long garment of blue cloth, in the form of a great coat, similar to that worn by Europeans, and such as has been adopted by the army at Constantinople, covered his military dress. Round his head he had a cachemir shawl carelessly arranged.

"He ascended the staircase, and, having passed through the great saloon, where numerous spectators had assembled, he advanced towards the hall of audience, where the viceroy was seated. The apartments were magnificently lighted. When Abdallah appeared at the threshold of the door, Mehemet Ali rose, and looked at him with a smiling air, as if to encourage him to approach. Abdallah hastened to him, and, bowing his head, fell at his feet, and kissed the hem of the viceroy's garments.

"'Forgive, your Highness,' said Abdallah, in a faint voice, and scarcely able to repress his tears, 'forgive my faults; and, since heaven has endued your soul with the qualities of a sovereign, let your pardon be that of a sovereign, not that of a vizier.'

"Mehemet Ali extended his hand to him, raised him,

and invited him to sit down on the divan by his side. In complying with the desire of the viceroy, Abdallah fell on his knees upon the divan before him. Mehemet soothed him by kind and paternal language: he assured him that he harboured not the least animosity, and that, forgetting the past, he considered him thenceforward as one of his sons. He made the kiaya sit down too. After coffee had been served, a pipe was handed to Abdallah; he at first refused it, but, being pressed by the viceroy, he at length took it.

"After this affecting scene, his Highness made a sign to those present to retire, and he remained in secret conference with Abdallah and the kiaya for half an hour.

"A palace was assigned to Abdallah near that of his Highness, who desired him to go and lie down, and to come again to see him on the next and each succeeding day.

"Abdallah retired with a serene countenance, accompanied by several persons of the court, and found at the door of the palace the horse of the viceroy himself, which had been prepared for him; he asked if it was the same that Mehemet Ali rode. On receiving a reply in the affirmative, he kissed the saddle and mounted the horse, surrounded by several officers, who accompanied him on foot to the apartments destined for him, where he found a guard of honour.

"The viceroy made a present to Abdallah of a handsome snuff-box, enriched with diamonds, and another in enamel, with a gold-hilted sabre.

"Orders were then despatched to Cairo, to prepare a palace for the residence of Abdallah and his family, which was expected from Acre.

"Throughout the scene which we have here described, Mehemet Ali displayed those noble and generous sentiments with which his great heart is endued. Clemency is one of the most glorious attributes of sovereigns, and Mehemet exhibited in all its lustre that virtue, which, combined with so many other eminent qualities that distinguish him, will render his name immortal in the annals of history."

I had given Abdallah notice of my visit, and he had replied that he should be delighted to make my acquaintance. I repaired to his residence, accompanied by our vice-consul, the chancellor, and a dragoman.

The palace inhabited by Abdallah is on the island of Roudah, about four hundred paces from that occupied by his harem. We had to cross the canal to reach it.

On our arrival, we found at the door about a score of slaves, some of whom had followed him hither, and the others been given to him by the viceroy. After making their obeisance, they introduced us, walking two and two before us. On reaching the divan, a young man of middling stature, elegantly though very simply dressed, advanced towards us: it was Abdallah. We should the less have supposed that it was he, because he had risen to receive us, an extraordinary and absolutely strange piece of politeness in a Turk, and still more in a pacha, who never rises to a Christian, be his rank what it may, He was extremely civil, laid his hand upon his heart, and made me sit down by his side. Immediately afterwards, refreshments were brought us, and pipes similar to the pacha's, a circumstance which I mention merely to show the very particular attention paid to our reception. Nevertheless, he appeared embarrassed: I was still more so. I was sure that among the numerous persons around us the government had some spies. The conversation was cold, constrained; I measured every word. Abdallah never ceased repeating that he was infinitely obliged by my visit. Seeing that I spoke very little, and probably suspecting the motives of that reserve, he made a sign, and instantly all the attendants retired; but I perceived that they stopped in an adjoining apartment.

When we were left alone with Abdallah, the conversation became a little more unrestrained. He spoke at great length concerning his misfortunes, in which we appeared to sympathize. He related them with composure, and in very moderate terms. We were astonished to hear him frequently give the name of father to Mehemet Ali. This affectation led us to imagine that he, too, was fearful of being overheard; for the conduct of this Mehemet, of whom he spoke in such a filial manner,

was anything but paternal. The viceroy was far from performing what he had promised. He had engaged to grant Abdallah provisions for his household, two palaces, and an appanage. He who disposes of all property in Egypt could be at no loss for palaces and provisions; but as for the appanage, he had no means of furnishing that but by drawing upon his treasures; and when it came to the pinch, the generosity of the words only served to set off the avarice and the falsehood of the sentiments. The pacha has lost everything: his household consists of more than a hundred persons, for whose various wants he is obliged to provide. No pecuniary assistance has been afforded him. He is obliged to sell every day some of his diamonds, some of the shawls of his women; he has no money but what he obtains from the desks of the brokers of Cairo—a resource which must soon be exhausted. But what is that now to Mehemet! Pleased to see his enemy at his feet, he at first deemed it serviceable to his policy to show him that sort of kindness by which the conqueror is not less flattered than the vanquished: he intended that Fame, when publishing his triumphs, should also have to extol the loftiness of his character and his magnanimity. Now that his pride has what he desires, the rest is indifferent to him.

At the conclusion of our visit, Abdallah took from his bosom a bouquet of flowers, which he graciously presented to me as a mark of his esteem. He paid us the attention, unexampled among the Mussulmans, and the more surprising in him who has the reputation of detesting the Christians, to accompany us to the door, at the same time thanking us for the honour that we had done him. I wished him happier days, and strove to persuade him that they were not far distant. He paid particular attention to my words, which seemed to cheer him; and, to express the gratitude which they excited, he never ceased laying his hand upon his heart. I should have been touched and melted even to tears, if something frightful, something horrible, in his look had not constantly stifled within me the sentiments to which his language and manners gave birth. Never did I see such

eyes as Abdallah's! They are the eyes of the captive tiger playing with his chain. They reminded me more than once in the course of the conversation of the hyena of Mount Carmel.

LETTER XLVIII.

Asses at Cairo—Mataryeh, the ancient Heliopolis—Sycamore, under which the Holy Family rested—Fountain of the Virgin Mary—Monastery of St. Sergius—Cavern in which the Holy Family dwelt—The Nilometer—Palace of Schoubra—Slave-Market.

Cairo, February, 1st, 1833.

For some days after my arrival, I could not, though forewarned, conceive that in so large a city it would be impossible to procure a vehicle of any kind, to carry me conveniently and more speedily to the different places that I wished to visit. Judging from what I myself at first felt, it must be no slight disappointment to a European, and to one of my age especially, not to be able to obtain either chariot, or cabriolet, or anything at all like them. I have already told you, I believe, that, the horses being in general reserved for distinguished personages, for the Arabs, and for the cavalry, the others—and in this term ladies themselves are included—if they do not choose to go on foot, have no resource but asses; and I have been obliged to submit to the common lot. Fortunately, I find those animals much more convenient to ride than I could have imagined. Their number in Egypt is immense; and, for beauty, shape, intelligence, they are indisputably—take the expression, I beg you, in the most favourable signification—the first asses in the world. Though I have seen many of them in every country, never did I meet with such in any.

The Egyptian ass possesses extraordinary spirit. His step is sure, his gait so easy as not to produce the slight-

est unpleasant movement, and, to crown his merits, he is indefatigable. I make long excursions with him on the trot, in full gallop, without his ever tiring. If, after thus running two or three full hours through the dust of the city, or the sands of the environs, I happen to alight for a moment, either out of curiosity or upon business, when I come back to him, I find him lively, looking proudly at me, pawing the ground, and, like the blood-horse, manifesting impatience to be gone. In short, my friend, nothing can be more brisk, more active, more vigorous, more adroit, and were I not fearful of appearing ridiculous, I would say, more intelligent, than the ass of Cairo. But for that intelligence, twenty times already should I have got my head broken, or run the risk of being crushed among the crowd of camels and dromedaries, laden with enormous chests, and blocking up the narrow streets through which he was carrying me.

More grateful than the European, in spite of the civilization on which the latter piques himself, the inhabitant of Cairo can duly appreciate the services which he derives from the most despised, the worst used of domestic animals among us; and he rewards him by constant care and attention. He curries him, washes him, combs him, shaves his whole body in very hot weather, and supplies him with plenty of food. With the wealthy even he is an object of luxury, for which twelve or fifteen hundred francs are sometimes paid. To be sure, this is but the continuation of what has always been practised in the East; where, even in the time of the patriarchs, the ass was held in esteem and formed part of their riches.

One of my most interesting excursions since my last letter has been to visit Mataryeh, the ancient Heliopolis of Egypt, celebrated for its temple of the Sun, and still more for the abode of the Holy Family there, when Joseph and Mary were obliged to flee from Judea, in order to save the infant Jesus from the sanguinary edicts of the cruel Herod. After having seen so many profane monuments, which, how worthy soever they may be in themselves of admiration on the score of the arts, frequently filled me with sad thoughts, by reminding me

much less of the master-pieces of human genius than of the disgraceful and absurd superstitions of nations, it was cheering to direct my steps towards the places sanctified by my Saviour, and to behold fresh memorials, fresh monuments, of my faith. Mataryeh is but a league and a half from Cairo. M. Champion had the kindness to accompany me.

On approaching it, the first object that we perceived was an obelisk of red granite, of a single block, similar in form and height to Cleopatra's Needles. On one of the faces we saw a sculptured cross, which has given rise to various interpretations of the learned, and on the subject of which I could not obtain any precise information.

Mataryeh is but a mean village, where nothing is to be seen but huts and ruins. General Kleber immortalized himself by the famous battle fought there, in which he exterminated the army of the grand-vizier, and thus insured, for some time, the possession of Egypt to France.

The ancient city, on the site of which the village is built, was, according to the historians, one hundred and forty stadia in circumference. Its origin is lost in the darkness of the most remote antiquity. The Hebrews called it On, and the Greeks Heliopolis, city of the Sun, a name which occurs in Scripture. Aseneth, daughter of Potiphar, priest of the Sun, whom Pharaoh gave to wife to the patriarch Joseph, was a native of this place. The Jews who fled to Egypt, during the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, were very numerous there in the time of Ptolemy Philometer. They obtained from that prince permission to erect, not far from the place, a temple to the true God ; and exercised their worship there till the time of Vespasian, who ordered the Roman governor to destroy it.

Nothing is left of the famous temple of the Sun but ruins that are scarcely to be recognised, and that convey no idea of its magnificence. We know from Diodorus Siculus, that Sesostris caused two obelisks, one hundred and twenty cubits in height, and eight wide at the base, to be erected before this edifice. It was these that the emperor Augustus removed to Rome, after Egypt had been conquered and reduced to a Roman province. Ac-

cording to M. Champollion, Cleopatra's Needles also must originally have stood at the entrance of this same temple of Heliopolis, and been removed thence to Alexandria. That eminent scholar attributes their erection to Mœris, who, upon this supposition, must be the same as the Mespheus mentioned by Pliny, and adds that the inscriptions upon them were by Sesostris and his successor. In disputing these so positive assertions of Champollion's, well informed men appeal not only to the general silence of history, but to that of Diodorus Siculus in particular; and, as they cannot make up their minds to believe that this historian, who, according to them, had visited Egypt, after noticing the obelisks of Sesostris at Heliopolis, should not have said a word concerning those of Mœris, if they had been standing at the same place, they class the new opinion among the conjectures, more or less obscure, more or less probable, of science. If I had a right to express my sentiments on a subject so foreign to my studies, you will easily guess to which side I should be disposed to lean, from my respect for the profound erudition of one who has penetrated so far into the mysteries of the language of the Egyptian inscriptions.

At Mataryeh, there is to be seen an aged sycamore, which most strangers go to look at. It is dear to the Christians in particular, because, according to the tradition, the Holy Family, in its flight, rested in its shade. This sycamore, an object of general veneration in the East, stands in a large garden, or rather in a wood of orange-trees. Several branches have been apparently grafted upon its trunk, and are now of considerable size. It presents one of the most extraordinary phenomena of vegetation. Assisted by M. Champion, I measured its circumference, which is more than six fathoms. A great number of persons have taken pleasure in engraving their names upon this majestic tree, the aspect of which produces impressions the more profound, inasmuch as it reminds Christian piety of circumstances the more capable of moving it: the persecution of a child by a tyrant, the maternal anguish of Mary, the alarm and anxiety of Joseph. We stopped some time to contemplate it, communicating our thoughts, and both of us admiring how, from the per-

secution to which the sight of this sycamore carries us back, down to these of the most recent times, weakness has miraculously triumphed over might, how innocence has constantly escaped the snares and the fury of all-powerful guilt, how terrible is the end of all persecutors, beginning with that Herod, whom his infamous flatterers surnamed the Great, whom the justice of heaven doomed to rot alive, and whose death the worms did not await to devour his greatness.

Before we retired, I broke off a few sprays from the hospitable tree, which I carried away as a precious relic.

Fifty paces farther, we saw the Virgin's fountain, which, according to tradition, is of miraculous origin. God caused it to issue from the bosom of the earth to refresh the infant Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, in a country parched by the sun, where the traveller suffers most from the heat and thirst. The water of this spring is sweet and agreeable; that of all the others is brackish and ill-tasted. I am well aware that, if I were to relate this wonder to a philosopher, he would laugh at it. But what is there at which a philosopher does not laugh? I have known some who laughed even at the justice of God, almost like those wretched creatures who laugh at human justice, till it comes to their turn to appear before it, and to ascend the scaffold. For my part, without pretending that this statement deserves the same credit as if it were recorded in the sacred Scriptures, I cannot help discovering in the circumstances a connexion, a manifest relation, with preceding events. It seems so natural that God should do for his Son, for Mary, and for Joseph, what he had not disdained to do, through the medium of Moses at Mount Horeb, for a murmuring and ungrateful people; and the idea of the Holy Family overcome with fatigue refreshing itself with the pure water of a spring, which it owed to the bounty of Him who had miraculously warned it by an angel to flee into Egypt, penetrates my heart so profoundly, that I cannot withstand the impulse which inclines me to believe it.

According to the same tradition that records the origin of the Virgin's fountain, the Holy Family, on leaving the

sycamore, directed its course towards Memphis, and stopped at the place where Old Cairo now stands, where it remained till the death of Herod. The retreat where it secreted itself is in the monastery of St. Sergius, which is called Dair el.Nassara, and which I have visited.

The area occupied by this monastery is very extensive. The walls, from their height and thickness, resemble those of a fortress. The church is small, mean, and has scarcely any ornament but a few lamps of glass or wood, suspended from the ceiling by cords. On each side of the high altar is a flight of a dozen steps, by which you descend to a subterraneous chapel or grotto, about twenty feet long, and twelve wide. There, it is said, dwelt Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Above the altar, in this chapel, is a very ancient picture, representing the Virgin on the left bank of the Nile. This picture closes the entrance to a second, smaller grotto, which the monks call the Oven, because it is somewhat in the form of one, and which belonged to this humble asylum. On beholding this gloomy abode, Bethlehem and Nazareth came into my mind; I recollected that he who had taken refuge there predicted to his disciples that, not being above their master, they should, like him, suffer persecution; and I felt a sort of Christian joy in considering that, even in our days, the divine prophecy has been fulfilled; that in more than one place the caverns, in others the rocks, had afforded asylums against the persecutors; that the persecuted had lived in peace till the death of the Herods of their time, and had then gloriously issued from them, to continue a work that shall cease only at the gates of eternity.

On the morning of the 29th, I went a second time to the island of Roudah, to see the famous Mekias or Nilometer, which I had not had time to inspect, on the day when I paid my visit to Abdallah.

The Nilometer serves to show the height of the river. The Turks long concealed it from the curiosity of strangers: everything concerning it was enveloped in a veil of mystery. It is merely an octagonal pillar of a single block of white, or rather yellowish, marble, like that of some of the antique columns, which are still to be met with in certain houses of Cairo. Its capital, of the Corinthian

order, is gilt. It stands in the middle of a square basin or well, the bottom of which is level with the bed of the Nile. It is divided into Egyptian cubits; and the Egyptian cubit is twenty fingers' breadth, which, reduced to our measure, is equal to twenty inches six lines. Over the well is a wooden dome, covered with yellow and blue paint, and with gilding in tolerable preservation. You descend into it by a flight of steps, at the bottom of which, when the water is low, you perceive small niches made in the wall, the purpose of which I could not learn.

The Nilometer formerly . .d in a temple, dedicated to the god Serapis. The Mussulmans inclosed it in a mosque, which is now in ruins, and amidst the relics of which a powder manufactory has been established: it is guarded, day and night, by sentinels. Their orders, in regard to visiters, are extremely strict. I was without arms; my janissary had his cane and his sabre: he was obliged to leave them at the door, lest one, striking against the other, should produce a spark and occasion some disastrous accident.

I availed myself of the afternoon to visit the summer palace which the viceroy has recently built at Schoubra, a small village, a league distant, on the banks of the Nile. The avenue leading to it is worthy of a royal residence. The gardens, though in a rather Turkish taste, are magnificent: one part of them is reserved for the exotic plants which Mehemet cultivates, and which he hopes to naturalize in Egypt. In the centre stands a building of white marble, of prodigious extent, within which is a basin likewise of marble, so spacious that numerous boats can pass to and fro, in all directions, without running foul of one another. Around it run elegant galleries, at the four corners of which are large halls and divans, fitted up with the most costly decorations. Marble lions and crocodiles, of admirable workmanship, spout water incessantly from their nostrils into the kind of lake formed by this reservoir, and keep it always at the same height. At night, numberless lamps of alabaster illumine the scene and render it still more delightful. To the gardens adjoins a park not less remarkable, in which are col-

lected a great many foreign animals, and among the rest a superb opossum, a present from the king of England.

Enchanted as I was with what I had just beheld, the scene which I had before me, as I returned to Cairo, made me almost forget it. The weather was fine ; the evening breeze cooled the air. The trees of the alley leading to the city were peopled with birds which fluttered among their boughs, and celebrated the close of day with an extraordinary chirping and warbling ; a multitude of boats, going up and down, covered the Nile ; the country refreshed the eye by the beautiful verdure with which, on that side, it is carpeted ; numbers of cattle were grazing in it ; the banks of the river, bordered with palaces, pleasure-houses, manufactories, in their turn attracted my eye, which, ranging from them to the Mokatum, the Desert and its gigantic mausoleums in the distance, brought back my thoughts to serious meditations.

Next day I visited the slave-market, accompanied by the Austrian consul. I shuddered beforehand at the idea of what I was to see—man making a barbarous and shameful traffic of his fellow-man—selling him, to become whatever it suits the convenience, perhaps whatever it pleases the infamous caprices, of another to make him. As I approached the bazar where this detestable trade is carried on, I was overpowered by feelings not to be described, an inexpressible mixture of horror and pity : methought I had already before my eyes the greedy dealer, wholly engrossed with the success of his iniquitous speculations, and coolly calculating the profits of them : the wary purchaser, disputing about the value of the commodity to obtain an abatement ; and the hapless victim uttering cries of grief, which found no access either to the soul of him who called himself the master, or his who was about to become so. On entering, I saw about a score of negresses seated on the ground, the eldest of them scarcely twenty years of age. Deep dejection marked their countenances ; one only smiled while arranging the hair of a companion ; another had a child about two years old, in her arms. Nothing could be more interesting than this little negro who was playing with his

mother's large silver ear-rings. I should have looked in vain for men among the slaves exposed for sale: the viceroy had appropriated them all to himself, and made soldiers of them.

The Abyssinian women are of a sallow complexion; they are reputed to be more valuable than the negresses. They are in the vestibules; these have an iron gate, between the bars of which you may see them. As for the white slaves, Christians are not allowed either to see or to buy them.

Most of the black slaves of both sexes come from Kordofan, Sennaar, and Darfour. The caravans bring them by thousands, tearing them without pity from their country, from their dearest affections; answering their cries, their tears, their entreaties, only by force and violence. The sufferings of these wretched creatures, in crossing the Desert in such numbers, are inconceivable; mothers and young girls, dropping from fatigue, are left upon the road, stretched on the scorching sand; there they expire, cursing their murderers, and their blanched bones are soon trodden under foot by other barbarians conducting fresh victims to Cairo.

There are none of these hapless people but regret their country, and manifest profound grief at being for ever separated from it. But those who feel their lot most keenly are the blacks from Darfour. Endued with more sensibility than the others, they frequently cannot refrain from loudly deploring the loss of all that is dear to them, and by such complaints they draw upon themselves still harsher treatment.

I was wholly absorbed by the gloomy reflections which the first impressions had awakened in my mind, when M. Champion directed my attention to a female slave, clad in dirty rags, who was brought to the middle of the bazar, to be sold by auction. On seeing the bidders, to whose examination she was subjected, open her mouth, look at her teeth, make her walk, and so forth, "Let us go! let us go!" said I to the vice-consul, shuddering with horror and indignation; and, seizing him by the arm, I hastily retired with him.

Here, as in Europe, you are sure to be told that the

negro, when once bought, is treated like a child of the house into which he is introduced, rather than like a slave; that sometimes it so happens that he becomes the confidant, the friend, of his master; that he at length obtains his liberty in reward for his services: and it is further said that, if he is ill-treated, it is sufficient for him to say to his owner, "Take me back to the market," to oblige the latter to sell him again. But I should like those who advance such assertions to lay their hands upon their hearts and say, if it is really from a feeling of that pretended philanthropy, of which they make such a parade, that the seller tears the unhappy blacks from their families and from their country, and that the buyer, in his turn, purchases them; or if it is not evidently on both sides a speculation of sordid interest, of hideous avarice, which, calculating the value of the human being like that of the brute beast, confounds him with the animals, and leaves us in doubt whether it would hesitate to rip up his bowels if it were sure to find gold in them. I should like them to name a single wealthy Egyptian who has listened to the complaints of a slave whom he has ill used, and sent him back to the market; to mention a single slave, in whom all the feelings of nature were not utterly extinguished, who has refused to exchange the happiness of slavery for that of returning to the country which gave him birth, were he doomed to find there no other subsistence but the dates hanging from the palm-tree beneath which his mother used to repose with him.

LETTER XLIX.

Forest of Palm-Trees—Ruins of Memphis—Colossal Statue of Sesostris—Sakara—Field of Mummies—Pyramids of Sakara—Giseh—Sphynx—Pyramids of Cheops, Chephren, and Mycerinus.

Cairo, February 8th, 1833.

THE weather in the winter season, generally very fine here, has this year been so bad that, though I have been a month at Cairo, it has not been possible for me to set out for Mount Sinai. The different persons with whom I have intercourse have unanimously urged me to defer my departure, assuring me that the rains which have hitherto prevented it, and which still continue, would oppose almost insurmountable difficulties to my journey. Being compelled to stay a few days longer, I availed myself of this interval to go at once to see the pyramids of Sakara and Giseh, which I had intended not to visit till my return.

Very early on the 2d, I set out for Old Cairo with the consul, whose attentions to me are unbounded, and two of his friends. We crossed the Nile opposite to Giseh, at a point where that river is very wide and dangerous. Our beasts were put on board a boat with one sail.

On landing, we turned to the left, leaving on our right the desert of the Pyramids, which, though three leagues distant, appeared close to us. We had before us those of Sakara, and beyond them those of Darchour. Our plan was to sleep at Sakara, after visiting the ruins of Memphis, deferring our excursion to the Desert and to the pyramids of Giseh till the following day.

The country through which we passed was magnificent. Fields of flax, barley, lentils, beans, wheat, &c., made us admire the luxuriance of the vegetation. Farther off, numbers of cattle were grazing in the meadows, where the grass, of every tint of green, was so high as to

hide great part of their bodies from our view. Beyond these, we entered the Desert where this beautiful nature terminates : it is death by the side of life. We passed through villages very agreeably situated, but almost destitute of inhabitants. A few women, children, and aged men constitute the population left there by Mehemet Ali ; all who are capable of bearing arms have been carried off to swell the ranks of his army.

After a ride of three hours, we entered a vast forest of palm-trees, at the extremity of which we came in sight of the spot where stood the ancient capital of Egypt ; which it was easy for us to recognise from the description given of it by travellers, and from the heaps of rubbish that are met with here and there upon an area several leagues in circumference.

Memphis, after the decline of Thebes, became the capital of Egypt. The residence of Pharaoh, its immense population, its palaces, its public buildings, its temples, its monuments of all kinds, both sacred and profane, the numerous canals, through which run the waters of the Nile, its opulence, its arts, the genius of its sovereigns, the learning of its priests, the wisdom of its police, the renown of its laws and its institutions, all contributed to insure it the highest rank in the pagan world, and to promise it a perpetual duration. But Memphis, intoxicated with its prosperity, fancied itself omnipotent. With its vain superstitions and its idols, it excited the wrath of the God who had given Joseph as minister to one of its Pharaohs : ungrateful, it had persecuted and oppressed the people of Israel, and it was decreed that the anathema pronounced against it through the medium of Ezekiel should be fulfilled :—

" Thus saith the Lord : They that uphold Egypt shall fall, and the pride of her power shall come down . . . . . I will destroy their idols, and I will cause their images to cease out of Noph, (Memphis) . . . . . Thus will I execute judgments in Egypt ; and they shall know that I am the Lord." (Ezek. xxx.)

For many centuries past, down to this day, nothing is left of a city so great, so mighty, so honoured among the nations, but the ruins that we had before our eyes.

The most considerable are near the village of Mit-Rahineh. In certain places they lie in heaps, covered with dust, and remind you the more sadly of the nothingness of all human grandeur, from a sort of resemblance which they bear to the mounds of earth raised by the grave-digger over the remains of the dead. In passing through them, we paused at several blocks, unable to make out what could have been their destination. We came to a colossal statue, which is generally admitted to be that of Sesostris mentioned by Herodotus. This statue, of a single piece of granite, thirty cubits in length, is near the spot where stood the temple of Vulcan, one of the most magnificent in Egypt: it is thrown down with the face to the ground. The legs are broken, and part of them gone. The other portion is in perfect preservation, and so entire, that you would be tempted to believe the work to be fresh from the hands of the sculptor. The expression of the head is remarkable for the grace and beauty of the features. It is all that is left in the city where reigned the most illustrious of conquerors, whose name filled the world, to commemorate his glory ; that glory which, in the extravagance of his pride, man places in making himself talked of, in subjecting to his dominion a great number of provinces by arms and by violence, and in making millions miserable. A mutilated statue, a proud and haughty head, which more strikingly records the talent of the artist by whom it was executed, than the features and the exploits of his model—that head, bowed more ignominiously to the ground than were those of the conquered monarchs and princes whom the victor harnessed to his car—this is all that time has spared of the king of kings, of the lord of lords, as he ordered himself to be called. Bending over this wreck, I examined it in pensive silence. Though, in the course of a life chequered with strange vicissitudes, it has been my lot to witness the most astonishing scenes of a spectacle where human vanity rose to such a height that for a while it seemed to fancy itself the absolute arbiter of the destinies of the world ; though, after at least dragging at its car, if not harnessing to it, pontiffs and kings, it fell be-

fore my face, suddenly and like a mass of lead, into the abyss; yet never was I so powerfully struck by the nothingness of the things of this world, never did I admire with deeper feeling the inscrutable ways of Providence, than in presence of this colossus, which I found overthrown before the ruins of a temple that has disappeared, and on the site of a city which, out of all the monuments of its splendour and magnificence, has transmitted to us nothing save a few mostly shapeless stones and a little dust

We reached Sakara towards evening, and passed the night there.

Sakara, on the left bank of the Nile, contained, it is said, eighteen thousand inhabitants during the reign of the Mamelukes; now it is but a village, numbering scarcely three thousand. The principal occupation of the peasants is searching for mummies, or embalmed bodies of the ancient Egyptians, which have for some centuries formed an important branch of trade with the Europeans. The plain of Sakara, in which these bodies are found, was the necropolis of the south of Memphis. That part of the plain where they are discovered in the greatest number, is nearly a league from the village; it is now known by the name of the Field of the Mummies. To one who retains any feeling of the respect due to the dead, it presents a sad and painful scene. Here and there you meet with ruins of tombs, small vessels of earth or glass, heads, idols, torn bits of stuff, and other things, which bespeak the ravages of a sacrilegious lust of gain. If you penetrate into the catacombs situated beneath the sands of the Desert, it is much worse. Beneath these sands run in various directions long vaults, mostly hewn out of the rock, and in the sides of which are formed niches destined to receive corpses. You descend into them by shafts of considerable depth, by means of a rope, or by gently sloping descents. The traveller who enters these subterranean depositories cannot stir a step without perceiving traces of the most odious profanation—parts, sometimes considerable, of broken mummies, bones, fragments of the winding sheets which in numerous folds

enwrapped the bodies, fillets, bits of wood from the coffins, matters used for embalming, &c. It is now rare to find a place of sepulture that has not been violated. The stranger most shocked by this unworthy violation, teazed by the Arab, who sees in it nothing but a source of gain, at length becomes the purchaser of these relics, and in his turn merely regards them as an object of antiquity. As for myself, I must confess, my dear friend, that I yielded, not without some scruples, to the temptation. I bought of a Bedouin several small idols of baked clay, and of rude workmanship, which he had abstracted from these sepulchres.

The pyramids of Sakara are numerous. A league beyond Old Cairo, we had distinguished nine; on the spot we discovered eight more, of smaller dimensions. The height of the plateau, upon which they stand, is estimated at about fifteen feet above the plain. Some are of brick, others of stone, but all of them of rude construction, and in nowise remarkable.

The highest, built of brick, and of large dimensions, is much dilapidated: its base, we are assured, is eight hundred feet round. In 1821, Count de Minutoli, a Prussian general, had it opened. He discovered in it long subterraneous vaults, numerous corridors, vast halls, chambers whose walls are covered with hieroglyphics, and a sort of sanctuary, the destination of which is unknown. The sand, with which the wind has since blocked up the entrance, forbids all access to it without new labours equally tedious and expensive.

The second of the pyramids is still more ruinous than the preceding. Pietro della Valle, the pilgrim, who entered it at the beginning of the seventeenth century, gives the following account of it:—

"At the foot of the descent, we had not to mount, as in the outer pyramid; we found ourselves at once in the sepulchral chamber, which is very large and very lofty. The roof is not horizontal, as in the other, but it keeps gradually diminishing to an angle towards the top. From this chamber you pass by a small and very low doorway into a similar chamber, of the same dimensions.

and structure; for the pyramid was, probably, built for more than one person. But in neither of them did I find any tomb: there cannot have been any, or they must have been destroyed since. It is very true that in the second chamber you see a very lofty doorway placed between the marbles, and, on throwing a stone into it, I observed that it went very far; but the height is such that it would require a long ladder to reach the top. Some persons of the country said that the tomb is in this third chamber: I cannot tell, as I have not seen it, but it may be so. The corpse may, perhaps, have been put there that it might be more secure, on account of the difficulty of getting at it."*

The other pyramids of Sakara, scattered over a vast space, scarcely attract the notice of travellers. Science long had nothing but probabilities and conjectures to determine to what period and to what persons these monuments belong. From the discoveries of M. Champollion, it is now considered as certain that they were erected under the third dynasty, and that they are the most ancient in the known world.

Next morning, at eight o'clock, we resumed our route. After riding nearly an hour, sometimes amidst well-cultivated lands, sometimes along a high dyke, which serves for a road during the inundation, we arrived at the entrance of the Desert, which at this point begins two leagues from the pyramids of Giseh, that we were going to visit. Unluckily, the weather, which till then had been brilliant, suddenly changed. A cold wind arose, and blew with such violence, that one of our companions was nearly overthrown. In order to withstand it, we were obliged to keep close together with our guides by our sides. The traces of our steps disappeared the very moment they were printed upon the ground; the sand flew and covered us. Though lofty as mountains, the pyramids were shrouded from our view; everything about us was drowned in an ocean of dust. Not till

* Viaggi di Pietro della Valle, lett. 2, del Cairo, del 25 gennajo, 1616.

an hour had elapsed, did we begin to catch a glimpse of those monuments as through a veil. Presently afterwards, the sun breaking through the clouds, they suddenly presented themselves so distinctly, as to make us believe that we were close to them, though we were still at least half a league off. At length we reached the plateau on which they stand.

We had been ascending for ten minutes the hill leading to them, when we perceived the famous Sphynx, and hastened up to it. We could see nothing but the head, the neck, and part of the back : the rest of it is buried in the sand.

This monstrous statue is of a single block, which, we are told, forms part of the rock that it stands upon. It has been remarked, however, that the colour differs : it is of a deep yellow ; but as this difference does not exist in the fractured places, it has been concluded that this colossus was at first painted by the Egyptians.

The bulk and the prodigious length of the head and neck had long led to the conclusion, that the dimensions of the entire colossus must be enormous. It was doubtful, however, that they were so large as they are stated to be by Pliny, who asserts that, from the top of the forehead to the bottom of the belly, it measures one hundred and seventy-two feet. The excavations recently made under the direction of M. Caviglia, formerly a naval officer, have proved that there is no exaggeration in this account, and put an end to all uncertainty. He had the patience and perseverance to clear the forepart of the Sphynx down to its base. The gigantic proportions of the statue have been ascertained, and it is now known that it represents a monster, half man, half lion, the paws of which rest upon the rock, and extend fifty feet beyond the body. On the second claw of the left fore-foot has been found a Greek inscription, with the name of Arrian, the historian of Alexander ; between the feet a block of granite, on which are represented two small sphynxes, in relievo ; and near it a small sanctuary in ruins. It is deeply to be regretted that the encroachments of the sand have again intercepted this astonishing object from the curiosity of the traveller.

The parts that continue uncovered are much damaged, especially the head: it is generally admitted, however, that it has an Ethiopian countenance. Persons who have ascended to the top of the head assert that they have found there an aperture fifteen or sixteen inches in diameter, and that it is the outlet of a hole nine feet long, formed in the interior of the statue; they add that its depth cannot be precisely ascertained, on account of the quantity of stones that have been thrown into it. As Giseh was the second necropolis of Memphis, several of the learned have conjectured that the Sphynx was its tutelar deity, that oracles were delivered there, and that the priests introduced themselves into the interior, and so lent it their voice. Others, founding their opinion on certain ancient traditions, and on the very position of the statue, which looks towards the Nile, imagine that it was merely destined to indicate the overflowing of the river. It is also a very common opinion, but which appears to be as yet unsupported by any solid reasons, that it communicates by means of subterranean cavities with the highest of the pyramids.

Having satisfied our curiosity respecting the Sphynx, we proceeded towards the last-mentioned monuments, which are not far from it. I have told you what an impression the distinct view of them produced on my mind. When closed to them, my eye measured them, I may say, without astonishment, without surprise. The only thing that struck me was the excessive disproportion between these gigantic masses and what they were destined to cover. Their prodigious height, their enormous bulk, those rocks piled upon rocks, bearing all their weight upon a handful of dust—much less than this would have been sufficient to awaken in my mind thoughts which would never have been suggested by all that I have read, by all that I have seen, most fit to convince me of the littleness, the pitifulness, the nothingness, of man. Inexpressible feelings succeeded each other in my soul. The vilest insect living beneath the stones of one of these tombs might, methought, boast with more reason of enjoying it than he who, after exhausting his skill and his

treasures, the treasures and the lives of his subjects, in its erection, had said, in the delirium of his pride: "It is for me!"

The pyramids of Giseh are very numerous: there are nearly fifty, of unequal size. They are alike in this, that all of them are placed, with a very slight deviation, towards the four cardinal points. The three largest are those which have hitherto been designated, after the ancient historians, particularly Herodotus, by the name of Cheops, Chephren, and Mycerinus; and which M. Champollion asserts to be the tombs of the first three kings of the fifth dynasty, Souphi I., Sensaouphi, and Mankeri.

These pyramids stand upon a rock, the plateau of which rises towards the north, and gradually declines, especially on the west towards the Desert. The height of this rock above the plain has been variously estimated by historians and travellers. The ancients suppose it to be about one hundred feet; some of the moderns reduce it to sixty-three; still more recently it has been computed at fifty. As, at a distance, the rock seems to form but one mass with the piles which it supports, perhaps it is to this cause, at least in part, that we must attribute the kind of illusion by which they appear to the observer, placed at a great distance, like mountains whose tops are lost in the clouds: whereas, when he is close to them, they seem to lower themselves, as it were, to bring their summits within the reach of his eye—a fresh illusion, favoured by the prodigious dimensions of the base, which tend to diminish the apparent height of the monuments.

Their real height was not accurately known till the measurements made by the *savants*, who accompanied the French army at the time of Bonaparte's expedition to Egypt. It is now known that the pyramid of Cheops, which some travellers stated to be four hundred and eighty feet, and others five hundred and twenty, is in reality, four hundred and eighty-eight feet six inches; that of Chephren, three hundred and ninety-eight; and that of Mycerinus, one hundred and sixty-three.

It was long believed that, according to Herodotus the stones used for building the pyramids were brought thither from a great distance: there is now no doubt that all of them, excepting the marbles or granites, with which they were lined, were extracted from the very spot on which they stand; and from quarries in the neighbouring Lybian mountains. An accurate analysis of the materials, made by the most eminent men of science in France, leaves not the least uncertainty on that head. It is now known that the principal stones are calcareous, fine-grained, of a light gray, easy to cut, and resembling, in their nature, those of the quarries of the country; and that those which formed the magnificent linings of the pyramids of Cheops and Mycerinus, and were removed from the former many centuries ago, from the latter very recently, were Ethiopian jasper, and the beautiful rose-coloured granite of the island of Elephanta.

It is easy to conceive that such structures must have required an immense expenditure of time, hands, and money. To form an idea, merely an approximate one, on this subject, we have but the testimony of the Greek historian, whom we are always obliged to quote on the subject of ancient Egypt, and that of Pliny, who, coming after him, only repeated his statements. "There was engraved," said Herodotus, "on one of the faces of the great pyramid, in Egyptian characters, how much had been expended merely for garlic, leeks, and onions. The person who interpreted this inscription told me that the sum amounted to sixteen hundred talents (four million and a half of francs, French money). If this be correct, how much must it have cost for the rest of the food of the labourers, for their clothing, for iron implements," &c. One hundred thousand labourers, he adds, were continually engaged in the work; they were relieved every three months by a like number; and yet, the pyramid alone, without including the construction of the dyke, was not finished in less than twenty years.

It was at this great pyramid that we stopped longest. Like all the travellers who come to the Desert, we walked round it, not without difficulty, sometimes over rubbish,

at others, upon a fine sand, into which our feet sunk at every step.

Two entrances lead to the interior; one near the western angle, and, at about two-thirds of its height, introduces you into a small square chamber, in a corner of which is to be seen a sort of well, the outlet of which is not known; this entrance has long been abandoned. The other looks towards the north, and is sixty feet above the base; it is by this that all those who explore the monument enter. We were, at first, disposed, from a movement of curiosity, to go in, but reflection soon dissuaded us from the undertaking. Weary as we already were, what should we have gained by fatiguing ourselves still more in gloomy labyrinths, most of which you cannot pass through without stooping or crawling, by the light of torches, which the fall of the least substance, or the wing of a bat, is liable to extinguish; in narrow passages, which, after incredible difficulty, after endless turnings and windings, only bring you at last to an empty sepulchre, to two naked halls or chambers, which have nothing remarkable but their names, the king's chamber, and the queen's chamber; to return with the same labour, the same difficulty, the same danger, and to leave at last, with garments torn or soiled by contact with the ground or the walls, pallid face, and lungs oppressed by the want of fresh air!

To the satisfaction of exploring the interior of the Cheops, I should certainly have preferred that of ascending to the platform in which it terminates. It would have been to me far more interesting to contemplate, from that elevation, the rich and fertile Egypt, the numberless windings of its river, and that multitude of canals which distribute its fertilizing waters over the whole face of the country; above all, to survey the extensive ruins of Memphis; those cities of the dead, where so many ancient generations were buried: those deserts which surround without protecting their remains; and that populous city, which, at this day, a modern Pharaoh crushes with the weight of his ambition, his avarice, and his pride.

Methought that at this height my soul, more at liberty, would have soared more impetuously towards the skies, and drawn from them new and more wholesome inspirations ; that, beholding at my feet, the royal ashes of so many dynasties, that hovering over, as it were, and looking down upon their glory, I should the better have felt and comprehended its vanity ; and that then I should have descended with better thoughts, with a heart more detached from the things of this world, more aware of the illusions of all that is passing, more firmly resolved to seek its glory in the glory of Him who alone can associate it with his happiness and his eternity.

But, after some observations of our guides, we thought it better to renounce an enterprize, the execution of which is not only very laborious, but full of danger, especially as the wind was blowing with violence. Many of the stones which form the steps of the monument are broken ; some, more deeply penetrated by the action of the sun's rays, are in a state of decomposition ; others, less solidly united, give way under the foot as you ascend, tumble down whole or in fragments, and, unless great care be taken, are liable to occasion fatal accidents. It is not long since an English traveller lost his life there. On arriving at a certain height, he slipped backward, and was dead when he came to the foot of the pyramid.

The second pyramid, that of Chephren, is about five hundred paces from the preceding, and nearly equal to it in height. It differs from it in its top, which terminates in a point, and still more in its base, the cube of which is smaller. The lower part, now covered with sand and rubbish is, according to Herodotus, of Ethiopian stones of various colours, which form a kind of pedestal. The rest, from the first tier, was entirely covered with smooth and polished stone ; of this covering a very small portion remains, down to about forty feet below the top. M. Belzoni, who some years since, penetrated into the interior, having with great labour and difficulty reached the principal chamber, found there a large sarcophagus, containing a quantity of bones, which, on being examined

by skilful English anatomists, were declared to be those of an ox. Hence it was concluded, and, probably, very justly, that these remains had belonged to some god Apis, and that this deity had shared the honours of royal sepulture with the Pharaohs.

I shall say but a word concerning the third pyramid—that of Mycerinus. Built externally on the plan of that of Cheops, it was covered with a red granite of Elephanta, of the same species as that of most of the Egyptian obelisks. The greediness of the Arabs has prompted them to carry off the stones of this facing, either to sell or to adorn their edifices with them. Fragments of them are still to be found in great number, at the base of this monument.

LETTER L.

Citadel, where the Pacha resides—Kleber's Tomb—Joseph's Well—Square of the Esbekyeh—Assassination of Kleber—Ahmet Bey Defterdar; his Cruelty—Ishmael Pacha.

Cairo, February 12th, 1833.

According to all appearance, I shall pass but a few days more at Cairo. The weather has become finer, my preparations are nearly completed, and, if nothing happens to derange my plans, I shall set out as soon as I can.

Since my last letter, my principal visits have been to the citadel, where the pacha resides, and the tomb of Kleber.

The citadel, to the north-east of Grand Cairo, is here called El Kala: it is a work of the great Saladin's, who built it at the time when he wrested the sovereignty of Egypt from the Fatimite caliphs. It stands upon a rock, which is a prolongation of the Mokatam. Its high walls are encompassed at a little distance with houses, which

are mostly falling to ruin, and some of them deserted. Going thither from the city, you find at the entrance a spacious area, the surface of which is the rock itself. This entrance is an enormous folding door, strengthened with iron, flanked by two towers, painted outside in red and white stripes, like the interior of the mosques and the principal edifices. The streets through which you ascend are narrower than those of Cairo, and have been cut out of the rock: the acclivity is extremely steep. In some places steps have been made to facilitate the ascent.

In advancing, in a north-east direction, you come to the remains of a square edifice, the walls of which were still standing at the time of the French invasion. It was open at top; its tallest columns were of granite, and of a single block. On the upper part of some of the smallest were remarked, not without surprise, four fleurs-de-lis of very large dimensions, the discovery of which has given rise to singular conjectures. They have led certain writers to think it probable that the kings of France derived their armorial bearings from Egypt. Of this edifice nothing is now left but the columns and ruins. It was, according to some, an ancient temple; according to others, a palace, which the Arabs attribute to Joseph, but which may have been erected by Saladin, whose name is said to have been found there.

Ascending nearly direct north from these ruins, you come to the great mosque of the citadel; and a little higher, to Joseph's well, which is its most remarkable monument.

This well has long been reputed of the highest antiquity. The honour of it was given to the patriarch whose name it bears, and it was thought that the style and the workmanship of the early Egyptians might be discovered in it. Rollin reckons it among the curiosities of ancient Egypt. At the present day, the best judges have no doubt that it is a work of Saladin's, who, it is said, caused it to be constructed that he might have near his residence a spring of less brackish water than that which had been previously used for ordinary purposes.

It is hewn from top to bottom out of the rock. It is two hundred and sixty-nine feet deep, divided into two parts by a reservoir, around which runs a platform. The descent to it is by a flight of low steps, about seven or eight feet broad. An hydraulic machine, composed of two cog-wheels, one of which, horizontal, catches in the other that is vertical, and provided at distances of six feet with small buckets or earthen pots, lifts the water from the bottom of the reservoir. It is afterwards raised to the top by means of a similar machine, and thence conveyed by pipes to different parts of the citadel. In both machines, the first wheel, which sets the second in motion, is worked by oxen, frequently by a buffalo, and sometimes by a camel. Having asked permission to go down into it, the sentry on duty at first refused, upon pretext that a few days before a pilgrim had been murdered there ; but a *bakschish* was sufficient to make him as complaisant as I could wish.

The pacha's palace is at the southern extremity of the citadel, and backed almost against the walls of the rampart: there is nothing magnificent in it but the great hall in which the divan is held. The other apartments are inferior both in beauty and dimensions to those in some of the palaces of Cairo.

The name of Kleber is so renowned in the East, that general raised the military glory of the French to such a height, and his end was so tragical, that I should have reproached myself, had I neglected to visit the places which more particularly commemorate him—the square of the Esbekyeh, where he was assassinated, and the spot where his mortal remains were deposited.

The Esbekyeh, the most spacious of the great open places of Cairo, communicates by a canal with the Nile, whose waters cover it at the time of the inundation and fill the cisterns. It is irregularly planted with sycamores, which afford an agreeable shade, and form pleasant walks. When the Nile has retired, the ground is tilled and sown; and, till harvest-time, there are only paths trodden at random by the inhabitants, who are not deprived of the privilege of walking there. It is bordered

by handsome houses, belonging to persons of the highest distinction. Bonaparte, on making himself master of the city, fixed his quarters in one of these houses, that of Elfy Bey, and had a garden laid out in the most agreeable manner; to this was joined a gallery, which looked towards the place. After his return to France, the house continued to be the head-quarters, and it was in the gallery that Kleber received the wound of which he died.

The companions in arms of the unfortunate general paid to his remains all the funeral honours which their situation in Egypt permitted. He was buried in one of the demi-bastions of the horned works, which the French had thrown up about the country-house of Ibrahim Bey, situated on one of the little branches of the Nile. This spot is to this day called Kleber's tomb, though there is no monument to perpetuate his memory.

I was here shown a circumstantial account of the crime which deprived the French army of its illustrious commander, and of the punishment inflicted on the perpetrator. I subjoin an extract from it. You will there see, not without shuddering, to what a degree of exaltation Mussulman fanaticism was carried, and all the extravagance of the vengeance which it inspired. The facts are related by M. Ader, an eye-witness.

"The grand-vizier, after his defeat at Heliopolis, his heart bursting with shame and rage at being obliged to return to Syria, hastened to publish papers in which the commander of the French army was represented as a man of no faith, a destroyer of all religion. In the name of Mahomet and the Koran, the minister summoned all good Mussulmans to the holy combat; he reminded them that heaven awaits those who put to death infidels, and he promised, moreover, his protection and earthly rewards to any one who should despatch the commander of the Christians in Egypt. This appeal to fanaticism was successful: a *seide* soon came forward.

"Soleyman el Habbi was remarkable for ardent piety. About twenty-four years of age, he was a prey to profound melancholy, kept up in his soul by religious fana-

ticism. The 'holy combat' opened to him the gates of heaven: he did not hesitate to devote himself, and received from the hands of the agents of the grand-vizier a dagger wherewith to consummate the glorious sacrifice. He was also furnished with money, a dromedary for the journey, and letters of recommendation, destined to procure him an asylum and abettors in Cairo: this asylum was a mosque; these abettors, the persons officiating there. Thus it was a temple to which this wretched young man came to confirm himself in his horrible design, and to mature its execution. Three ulemas, or chiefs of the Mussulman law, were in the secret; instead of dissuading him from his crime, they only excited in his heart a still greater thirst for infidel blood; they showed him in paradise the palm of murder. For a month Soleyman prepared himself for the 'holy combat,' by fasting and prayer! he daily followed his victim, attentively studied his habits, made himself familiar with the head-quarters; at length he had no more to do but to find a suitable opportunity, and chance offered it but too soon to his sacrilegious desires.

"Kleber had been residing for some time at Giseh; he lived in Mourad Bey's country-house there, while that which he usually occupied in Cairo was repairing.

"On the 14th of June, after holding a review in the island of Roudah, he entered the capital, and went to general Damas, the chief of his staff, to ask him for a breakfast. Several superior officers, members of the institute and heads of the administration, were present at this repast, during which the general appeared very cheerful. On rising from the table, he drew Protain, the architect, aside, and proposed to him to go to the head-quarters, that he might consult him about the repairs requisite there. Kleber's house was contiguous to that of Damas. As he was passing through the gallery between the two buildings, a man, meanly attired, taking advantage of a moment when the architect was at some distance, approached the general, prostrated himself with feigned humility, and seemed to wish to present a petition to him. Kleber, moved by the wretched look of

the suppliant, advanced, and stooped towards him. Soleyman, quickly rising, drew a dagger, and plunged it into the heart of his victim. The general fell, crying, 'I am murdered!' Protain ran up, seized the murderer, and would have secured him, but Soleyman gave him six wounds with the dagger, and threw him down. He then returned to Kleber, and inflicted three more wounds—a useless precaution, for the unfortunate warrior could not survive the first stroke.

"The gallery in which this atrocity was perpetrated looks out upon the place of the Esbekyeh. A guide who was passing at the moment when the general exclaimed, 'I am murdered,' ran affrighted to the house of general Damas, and thrilled with horror the rest of the breakfast party, which had not yet separated, by reporting this exclamation. They rose in disorder, and hastened to the victim, whom they found weltering in his blood, and deprived even of the comfort of being sensible of the attentions of friendship. Kleber still breathed, but all the efforts of art proved of no avail, and the army of Egypt was soon deprived of the conqueror of Heliopolis.

"Meanwhile, a strict search was made, and the Mamelukes themselves, who were better acquainted with the localities than the French, assisted them in it. Protain, on coming to himself had given a description of the murderer. Upon these indications, they set at liberty a sheik, remarkable for his hatred of the French, to whom their suspicions pointed. At length, in the gardens belonging to the head-quarters, under a thick spreading nopal, Soleyman was discovered. Though Protain declared that he was the man; though several persons asserted that they had seen him lurking about the places frequented by the victim; though the bloody dagger, found secreted upon him, was shown to him; still the wretch, pressed with questions and proofs, persisted in denying his guilt; and before they could draw a confession from his lips, they were obliged to apply the bastinado, after the manner of the East. They then learned with horror the instigations of Jussuf Pacha.

"A military commission was appointed to try Soleyman and the ulemas of the mosque of El Hassan, whom he had denounced as his accomplices. Three of these ministers were apprehended. Confounded by the declarations and the reproaches of cowardice with which the fanatic Syrian overwhelmed them, they manifested the utmost dejection; but the assassin, from the moment that all was discovered, never ceased to boast of his deed and to refer it to God.

"The three ulemas were sentenced to be beheaded. The court, in order to deter any other person from imitating the execrable zeal of Soleyman, decreed that he should first have his hand burnt off, and then be impaled; and that his body, left upon the instrument of execution, should be the food of the birds of prey. The infliction of this sentence was deferred till the day fixed for the funeral of his victim.

"From the moment that Kleber expired, a gun was fired every half hour. The funeral ceremony was announced on the morning of the 17th by salutes of artillery, the signal for which was given by the citadel, and which were repeated by all the forts. The troops of the province, the superior officers, military and civil, the authorities of the city, Christian and Mussulman, united by the same feeling of sorrow, came solemnly to the head-quarters to receive the remains of Kleber. The coffin was placed on a funeral car, drawn by horses; it was covered with a black pall, sprinkled with silver spots, and the paraphernalia of mourning formed a doleful contrast with the insignia of command. The funeral procession passed in religious order through the principal streets of Cairo, to the measured sound of cannon and musketry. It advanced slowly towards the entrenched camp, called Ibrahim Bey's. In the gorge of the bastion had been thrown up a hillock, the top of which was crowned with cypress; all the emblems of grief there met the sorrowing eye.

"The staff alighted; officers and soldiers came to throw crowns and flowers upon the body, and to drop a tear upon his grave.

"After the ceremony, the procession moved off, and directed its course to the esplanade of the Institute, where Soleyman and his accomplices were to suffer the punishment of their crime. They arrived—the ulemas dissolved in tears, and cursing the fate which had made them acquainted with the young Syrian; the latter, walking with firm step and bold look, and reproaching his companions with a weakness unworthy of true believers. The courage of the fanatic was not shaken for a moment; and if he did shed some tears, it was when in prison he was reminded of his family.

"The three ulemas were first beheaded. The horror which thrilled the immense concourse of spectators at the sight of this bloody execution reached not the heart of Soleyman: he looked on with disdainful indifference while the stake that was to serve for the instrument of his death was sharpened. His hand was first held over a pan of burning coal. The fire consumed the flesh without extorting from him a groan. He endured, with the same firmness, the excruciating pangs of his second torture. His features were scarcely discomposed; and when the stake, fixed perpendicularly, had raised him into the air, he surveyed the multitude, and with sonorous voice repeated the profession of faith of the Mussulmans:—'There is no God but God, and Mahomet is his prophet.'

"Soleyman remained alive upon the stake for four hours. He asked several times for drink: the executioners opposed its being given to him, as they said that it would instantly stop the pulsation of the heart; but, when they had retired, a French sentry, yielding to the impulse of pity, reached some water to the sufferer in a vessel placed at the end of his firelock. No sooner had Soleyman drunk it than he expired."

Among the famous personages of Egypt, there is one whom I have omitted to mention, when treating of the family of Mehemet Ali: this is Ahmet Bey Defterdar, son-in-law of that prince. On my arrival here, I had a sort of desire to see him, but gave up the idea from an inexpressible feeling of horror. I really believe that a more bloodthirsty and ferocious being does not exist.

This man is at this time forty-five years old. He possesses some information, and is more particularly conversant in history and geography. He has made a very accurate map of the Cordofan, and the country of Sennaar. He is master of immense wealth, and has magnificent palaces in Cairo, where he usually resides. Brought up among the grandees of Constantinople, his manners are tinctured by the education which he received, and by his long connection with the most distinguished personages. He is remarkably polite; and it is under pleasing forms, under an attractive exterior, that he conceals a most atrocious spirit: he is generally dreaded in the country.

Sent to avenge the death of Ismael Pacha, the eldest son of his father-in-law,* and to insure the conquest of the Cordofan and Sennaar, he fulfilled this double mission with the utmost cruelty. He put to death more than thirty thousand persons, and the terror which he excited caused the emigration of one hundred thousand more. In the end, the country became so deserted, that a famine ensued, and gave the last blow to the population. He returned with a fortune of sixty millions, to which his title of Defterdar enables him to add two or three more every year.

A few facts will suffice to give you a frightful idea of this monster.

During his expedition in the Sennaar, a poor woman came to him to complain of a soldier who had refused to pay her for a glass of milk, which he had taken from her and drunk. The value of the milk was five *parahs*, not

* Ismael Pacha, eldest son of Mehemet Ali, was detested in the Cordofan and the Sennaar, where he had committed a great number of atrocious actions. At Sennaar, he, one day, ordered one of the chiefs of the country to be bastinadoed. This man, enraged at such unworthy treatment, seized the first opportunity to revenge himself. Knowing that Ismael had gone to a village some leagues distant from his head-quarters, with an escort of forty men only, he repaired thither at night with his followers, surprised him in his lodgings in the dark, despatched him and most of his guards, heaped dry branches of trees and other combustibles about the house, and set fire to it. The intelligence of this event reached Cairo on the 5th of December, 1821.

quite five centimes, or about a halfpenny. Ahmet Bey asked her if she should know the man again. She pointed him out, on which he caused him to be seized by his guards, who, during that deplorable campaign, performed the office of executioners, and ordered his stomach to be ripped open, to see if the milk were there, forewarning the accuser that she should suffer the same fate if the charge proved false. It was true enough. He directed that she should be paid for her milk, and dismissed.

Some time since, one of the men belonging to his stables slightly wounded a horse while shoeing him. Ahmet Bey summoned him into his presence, made him lie down upon his belly, and ordered a couple of red-hot horse-shoes to be brought, and nailed one to each foot, while the persons in attendance durst not manifest the least sign of pity, much less oppose this act of barbarity. He, for his part, was quietly smoking his pipe, while feasting his eyes on this horrid sight.

The child of his gardener, only three years old, having taken a peach out of his garden and eaten it, he cleft him in two.

He was accustomed to have a snuff-box brought to him every half hour by one of his officers, and to take a pinch out of it; having reason to believe that the officer helped himself out of the same box, he warmly charged him with it; but the officer prostrated himself, and protested his innocence. One day, Ahmet Bey put a fly into the box, unknown to the man whom he suspected; unfortunately the fly was gone the next time that the box was handed to him, and the officer lost his head.

Ahmet Bey had, for a long time, two lions, (whether he still has them I know not,) which lived along with him in the divan. These animals knew their master perfectly, but they knew nobody else. When he was in a good humour, he would call one of his servants, oblige him to play with the lions, and laugh most heartily at every wound which they gave him. He would not put an end to this cruel sport, till he was fairly tired of laughing, or till the poor wretch, covered with wounds and blood, dropped dead upon the floor.

Whenever Ahmet Bey is bled, he thrusts his hand in the blood, squeezes it between his fingers, eyes it with savage pleasure, and thinks it *softer than velvet*—that is his expression. This scene, which is of frequent occurrence, fills his attendants with dismay. They are alarmed lest he should take it into his head to make a fatal comparison.

I could mention many more traits of this kind, but my pen is weary of relating such horrors.

There is at Cairo another personage who has made a great noise, and whom I should still less have liked to see than Ahmet Bey, not that, like the latter, he is bloodthirsty and ferocious; but he is infamous. This is an apostate, who, for the sake of gold, has sold his conscience, exchanged the Gospel for the Koran, and renounced the name of his forefathers for that of Soliman Bey, a name of ignominy, by which he is now known throughout all Europe. After a brief interval of favour and transient good fortune, despised by those whose faith and country he has forsaken, still more despised by those whose absurd creed he has embraced, he drags on a life of dishonour in shame and disgrace. Deserted even by those who flattered him most in the days of his elevation, he has most frequently no other companion than the remorse which clings to the soul of the renegado, and never tortures him so keenly as in solitude.

I was to have dined, one of these last days, with the minister at war, than whom there is not a man more necessary, or more devoted, to the cause of Mehemet Ali. His excellency had done me the honour to invite me to a splendid entertainment, which he intended to give in the part of his harem not inhabited by his women. The death of one of his nephews, which happened in the meantime, forbade him to indulge any other feelings than those of grief. This personage, who is reputed to be one of the most skilful of the Mahometans in the art of war, and in the science of administration, is distinguished by mild and polished manners. His wealth is immense: his palace is magnificent, and scarcely surpassed by that of Ibrahim, which is one of the finest in modern Egypt.

I shall say but a word concerning the menagerie which I have lately seen. It is less curious than most of those in Europe. The most remarkable of the animals of which it is composed are an elephant and two leopards.

In a preceding letter I have intimated that one of the principal duties of the Father warden of the Holy Sepulchre is to visit, at least once in a space of three years, the different monasteries scattered throughout Syria, Palestine, Cyprus, and Egypt. The present warden is now travelling in fulfilment of this duty. He arrived here last week, and landed at Boulak. He was at first received in the house of a pious widow, where he waited till the moment when he could, according to custom, make his solemn entry into the city. On such occasions, unless circumstances imperatively forbid, it is seldom that the Catholic population of the places where monastic establishments are situated fails to go forth to meet him, in order to do him honour, and to escort him to the convent, where he alights.

No sooner was it known at Cairo that his reverence was at Boulak, than the Coptic Catholic bishop, the clergy, and a considerable concourse of Catholics, prepared to go and meet him. Moved by a sentiment of religion, as much as by the recollection of the kindness which he had shown me during my residence at Jerusalem, I was anxious to join the persons who wished to give some *éclat* to the ceremony; and, with this view, I requested the minister at war to have the goodness to lend me one of his horses. His excellency had the attention not only to send me the animal which he kept for his own particular use, but also to place several of his *says* at my disposal.

The reverend Father made his entry amidst an immense concourse, collected by piety or curiosity along the road by which he was to pass. The Coptic bishop was on his right, and I on his left. The beauty of the horse which I rode, and the magnificence of his trappings, struck every eye; and, as it was impossible not to perceive at a glance to whom he belonged, the Catholics regarded this extreme complaisance of the minister for a

poor monk of La Trappe, going to meet an humble Franciscan, as a mark of protection granted to our holy religion; and the Mahometan crowd, save and except a few murmurs, behaved so much the more respectfully.

On reaching the monastery the reverend Father repaired immediately to the church; the train could scarcely follow him thither: the avenues were choked with the concourse of spectators. After the benediction, the clergy and the consuls were admitted to his reverence, and successively paid him their respects.

It was the second time that I had borne a part in this kind of ceremony, the more interesting for a Christian as it takes place in an infidel land. The reverend Father had visited Alexandria while I was in that city, and had been received there with great pomp. The merchant-ships, Italian, Spanish, Austrian, and Sardinian, were decorated with flags, hoisted their respective colours, several of them fired their guns, and the consuls vied with each other in paying the venerable warden all possible honour and respect.

LETTER LI.

Departure for Mount Sinai—Beautiful Dromedary from the stables of the Viceroy—Gate of Victory—The Desert—Petrified Wood—Scrupulous Sheik—Supper—Camels—Hospitable custom of the Sheik—Night-Scene—Silence of the Desert—Castle of Aschiroud—Route of the Great Caravan going to Mecca—View of the Red Sea and Suez—Environs of Suez—Interior of the town—Ugly Children—M. Manoula, agent of the East India Company—Visit to the Governor—Bonaparte—Gulf of Suez—Arabia Petræa—Charcoal-trade carried on by the Arabs—Fountains of Moses—Passage of the Red Sea by the Israelites—Shells of the Red Sea—Ash-Wednesday—Water—Small Bird—Antelope.

Cairo, March 18th, 1833.

Here I am, returned from Mount Sinai, my dear friend. After taking a few moments' rest, and arranging the various notes hastily made during the journey, my first thought is to return to our correspondence, and to resume my narrative at the point where I broke off in my last letter.

On the day before my departure from Cairo, I was still undecided upon the choice of the animal that should carry me. "Take the horse of the Desert," said some; "he will be easier and more convenient for you."—"Do not trust yourself to him," cried others; "he would not be able to bear the fatigue for any length of time. We advise you to choose the dromedary, the *ship of the Desert*, as the Arabs call him." I followed the latter advice. Still there was left the difficulty of procuring a dromedary, and above all of finding a good one. The governor, being apprized of my embarrassment, sent to offer me one out of the viceroy's stables, which I eagerly accepted. He accordingly sent me a handsome white dromedary, richly caparisoned, covered with a magnificent laced housing of purple velvet, and marked, on the thigh, with the cipher of his Highness,—a mark which, when seen at a distance by the Bedouins, would overawe them, and make them treat me with respect.

My caravan consisted of my janissary, a Bedouin sheik, and four Bedouins, who were to have under their charge the like number of camels, laden with a tent, a mattress, carpets, skins containing the quantity of water which we presumed we should need, other provisions, and beans for our cattle.

On the 14th of February, the caravan assembled at the Austrian consulate. The sheik went up to the consul, bowed before him, laid his hand successively on his head, his beard, and his heart, and promised to take the greatest care of me, and to defend me at the peril of his own life. The other Bedouins made the like declaration. The consul, whose complaisance I cannot sufficiently praise, insisted on accompanying me till I was out of Cairo.

No sooner had I leaped upon my dromedary than I was quite astonished to find myself perched so high. I was warned to pay attention, in mounting or in alighting, to lean forward or backward, according to his motions, that I might not run the risk of falling. This animal was extremely spirited; but he had the fault of rising suddenly when one was about to mount him. To obviate this inconvenience, my Bedouins tied one of his legs, and forced him to bow his head to the ground till I was in the saddle.

I left Cairo by the gate of Victory, Bab el Nassr, over which is this inscription in the Cufic language; "There is no God but God; Mohamed is the apostle of God, and Ali the friend of God. May the divine favour be upon both!"

We had not proceeded more than a few hundred paces, when we perceived a great number of uninhabited houses, and at a little distance a mosque, and some handsome buildings of stone, surrounded with galleries. This place is called Quoubbeh. In the distance I perceived on the left the obelisk of Heliopolis: it reminded me of the venerated sycamore which stands near it, but which the neighbouring trees concealed from my view.

By degrees, all traces of habitations disappeared, and

soon my eye, on whatever side, and to whatever distance it was cast, could discover nothing but one vast, bare, barren plain—in short, the Desert. One thing struck me, this was, to meet with petrified wood at every step. I felt the more surprise at this circumstance, as I am not aware that forests ever existed in this plain.

I had set out rather late from Cairo. After a ride of six hours, night obliged us to halt. Besides, I had need of rest. Though my habit of taking horse exercise rendered me less susceptible of fatigue from riding a dromedary, I was, nevertheless, tired. The camels were relieved from their loads, and I immediately had my tent set up. I was just entering it for the night, when my sheik came to me, and, pointing to the sky, asked me with supplicating look—what do you think?—I would lay any wager that you cannot guess. Gazing with all his eyes at the firmament, in which the stars were brightly glistening, he begged me to tell him if the sun had really set. I should have taken him for a maniac or a blind man, if my janissary had not reminded me that the Mussulmans, who observe the Ramadan, never eat till the sun is below the horizon; adding that my sheik, following the same practice out of devotion, durst not break his fast till he had assured himself by the testimony of another that his eyes did not deceive him. A word from me removed all his scruples.

Travellers contrive to encamp, if possible, on some spot of the Desert where bushes are to be found, and speedily unload the camels, which are no sooner rid of their burden than they go in quest of a coarse and scanty meal. If they are obliged to stop on a place that is absolutely bare, as soon as the spot is fixed upon, a number of men go in various directions to pick up what they can, and return, after a longer or shorter absence, with a quantity of dry plants, with which they make a large fire. The party seat themselves round it, and proceed to the preparation of their repast, consisting, in general, of unleavened cakes, made of flour mixed with water. These cakes, called in the country *rouga*, are extremely thin, and bake very soon under the ashes. Some eat

rice, onions, and lentils. When they have done eating, they sometimes drink coffee, of which the Arab is fonder in the Desert than anywhere else.

The camels possess a wonderful instinct for finding their master again, and the spot which they have quitted. At a certain hour, they return of themselves to the place where they were unloaded; nothing but a handful of beans is given to them; and there they wait quietly till it is time to resume their journey.

Before it was light, our Bedouins ate, according to their custom, what they had left the preceding day, loaded the camels, and the caravan started at daybreak. During a ride of eleven hours, we met with nothing but sand, and here and there, at long intervals, a little dry grass.

In the evening, after encamping, we were preparing to sup, when I heard my sheik saying, in a loud voice, and in the Arabic language, some words which I took for a verse of the Koran. He repeated them three times. On the preceding evening he had commenced with the same ceremony, but I had not heard him. I asked Mahomet, my janissary, what it meant: "It is his custom," he replied, "before any meal to cry. 'Let him who is hungry come and fill his belly.'" This practice originates in the hospitable disposition of the Arabs, to which I have had frequent occasion to advert.

At midnight I was suddenly awakened by an extraordinary noise and light. I stepped out of my tent, and saw, not far from me, my Bedouins at prayer, around a large fire of dry grass, the blaze from which shot up to a great height. Those sun-burnt faces, those black beards, those white turbans, behind which were grouped our camels, and those of some Arabs who had joined our caravan—all those countenances, whose character was rendered more expressive by the flame, which threw its light as far as my tent; that attitude of devotion; those words of religion breaking the silence of night; that desert; that serene sky; those sparkling stars with which it was studded; all concurred to make a deep and powerful impression upon me. Long did I contemplate this

picture, worthy of the pencil of the most eminent of modern painters.

On the following day, sand, and nothing but sand: you see only that in the Desert. No water, I need tell you: a ride of ten or eleven hours without stopping. As I could not read without difficulty on the dromedary, owing to the continual motion, I made a practice of getting a quarter of an hour ahead of the caravan, which went only at a foot-pace. When at that distance, I halted, recited the service, read, wrote, drew, and, as soon as my people overtook me, starting off again, I was gone like lightning, to do the same farther on. Sometimes I have pushed on to such a distance, that those whom I left behind me looked like specks. By this mode of proceeding, I found myself less tired, and turned my time to account. The profound silence which reigned around had an inexpressible charm for me: it kept up a continual devotion in my soul, and incessantly brought back to it the thought of Him who is the sole consolation of the Christian.

We passed the night amidst sand-hills, on which there were a few bushes.

Two hours after sunset, my Bedouins, very noisy fellows when they are not asleep, had redoubled their clack. Their din prevented me from sleeping: I sent my janissary to inquire the cause of it. They replied that the place was unsafe, and that their noise was intended to warn robbers, if there were any about, that we were awake, and our party numerous. Owing to this precaution, I could not get a wink of sleep the whole night. Did they tell the truth? perhaps so. But the fact is that the Arab is never tired of talking: there is a shouting, a torrent of words, that never ceases, and that is poured forth with increased vehemence as soon as they encamp.

We set out at sunrise, proceeding between sand-hills, which bounded the view on either hand. When within two leagues of Suez, we perceived on the left the fortified castle of Aschiroud, to the south of which passes the great caravan on its way to Mecca. This castle stands in a sterile plain, which we crossed, overwhelmed by excessive heat. From this point we began to descry Suez and

the Red Sea, which reminds one of the greatest wonders of the divine protection in favour of the people of Israel.

A league distant is a khan, the first that we have met with. Beside it is a well, at which our camels that had had no water for three days slaked their thirst.

The environs of Suez are melancholy beyond description. Not a blade of grass is to be seen for several leagues around: sand, dust, stones—nothing more. Let the eye turn which way it will, everything in nature is of a grayish tint: light gray, dark gray, gray somewhat less dark, but still gray. It is the same aspect as that of the dreary borders of the Dead Sea. The rocks are bare, the air without inhabitants, everything dismal, dull, and nought to temper the dismal effect, unless it be the view of the sea, whose waters are of an admirable azure.

The interior of the town corresponds with the exterior: ill-built houses, abject poverty, half-naked inhabitants, children entirely so, having, as throughout all Egypt, a cadaverous hue, and being extremely ugly. Childhood, so beautiful, so interesting, in almost all the countries of Europe, is absolutely hideous at Suez. Almost all the persons of that age have sore eyes, beset with flies, which they do not even take the trouble to drive away. Almost all of them are wry-necked, punch-bellied, or having other bodily defects still more repulsive. It is only among the old men that you perceive less disagreeable forms, and even some that are not destitute of dignity: nay, I have met with heads that were truly remarkable. It is a contrast to me the more striking and unaccountable, inasmuch as it appears to be diametrically opposite to the ordinary action of Nature.

Neither tree nor plant is to be seen at Suez, and it has no water but what is brought thither. The inhabitant of that place dies without having ever smelt the fragrance of a flower; without having ever plucked a fruit of any kind; without having ever slaked his thirst at a limpid stream. What water they need, they have to fetch laboriously from a distance of two leagues; it is brackish, and scarcely drinkable. Boats go twice a day from Suez,

to procure it on the east coast, which is about a mile off. It is then carried on the backs of camels to the shore.

Formerly a canal united the Nile with the Red Sea, and the waters of that bountiful river supplied the inhabitants of Suez as they passed. Of this important work nothing has long been left but ruins. It is reported as certain that the viceroy intends to reconstruct it.

The ebb-tide leaves to the south a great sand-bank, about two miles in length, to the east of which is a road which leads to the shipping.

No doubt is now entertained that Suez was the ancient town called, under the Ptolemies, Arsinoe, and subsequently Cleopatride.

On entering, I proceeded to the house of M. Manoula, agent to the East-India Company, to whom I had letters of recommendation. He is a schismatic Greek, who, besides Arabic, which he speaks extremely well, knows something of English, so that I could converse with him without interpreter. He has under his care the supplies of coal destined for the steam-vessel which comes from time to time from Bombay to Suez.

I informed the governor of my arrival, and apprized him that, having to deliver to him a letter from the viceroy, I should have the honour of calling upon him in the afternoon. M. Manoula accompanied me. His excellency received me with great ceremony. I handed to him the letter which I had brought : he took it, lifted it to his forehead, in token of respect, read it, and said to me in the most gracious manner : "You are master of Suez." I was tempted to answer that, if I had a right to dispose of that town, as he seemed to intimate, I would gladly make him a present of it : however, I only replied by one of those civil expressions which on such occasions politeness never fails to suggest.

M. Manoula showed me the room which Bonaparte had occupied, the chair on which he sat, the table at which he wrote. I occupied that room, I lay on that divan, I sat on that chair, I wrote at that table. On opening my window, I saw the spot where that general, coming from the Springs of Moses, and wishing to save

two leagues by avoiding the circuit of the point of the gulf, crossed the ford which is near Suez. It was the beginning of night; the tide flowed much more rapidly than had been expected; though attended by native guides, he narrowly escaped drowning. What blood and what tears would the wave that had carried him away have spared Europe! But he had a mission of chastisement to fulfil in regard to Europe, too long and too proudly guilty; like all other scourges, he was not destined to disappear till that mission should be accomplished.

Leaning on my window-sill, methought I beheld that extraordinary man amidst the waves. I saw his white-maned charger cleaving with broad chest the bitter billows, and making desperate efforts to reach the shore; while his imperturbable rider, relying upon his fortune, was thinking of something totally different from the danger that threatened him.

What reflections crowded upon me during the short moments that I passed in the apartment which that man had inhabited! What recollections then succeeded in my soul!

"I will send him against an hypocritical nation; and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.

"It is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few.

"For he saith, Are not my princes altogether kings?

"And my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people; and, as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth, and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped.

"And he saith, By the strength of my hand have I done it, and by my wisdom, for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man."

But oh! the vanity of pride! oh the nothingness of the greatness of him who is born to die!

"Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth

therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood.

"Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts send among his fat ones leanness, and under his glory he shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire." (Isaiah x.)

Thus the words of Isaiah told me what I had seen, and explained to me the tragic end of the conqueror, who, after having been so long the glory of France, widowed of her kings, and the terror of the rest of the world, died proscribed, banished to a rock amidst the sea, two thousand leagues from those to whom he was a hero, two thousand from those to whom he was a scourge, and who has left nothing behind him but a coffin, on which the hand of God is heavily laid.

And, penetrated with religious fear, I sank on my knees and adored the awful decrees of that divine justice, which nothing can turn aside; which, at its pleasure, breaks in pieces thrones and sceptres; which forms and destroys nations; and gives, when it will and how it will, empire or death, the diadem or fetters.

I set out at four in the afternoon, with the intention of sleeping at the Springs of Moses, and visiting the spot where, according to the tradition preserved from time immemorial in Arabia, and conformable to the opinions of the most eminent scholars, as Pococke, Shaw, Sicard, &c., the Israelites, pursued by Pharaoh, crossed the Red Sea. I had given orders to my janissary to go on before with the baggage, round the point of the gulf, to the place of rendezvous; my sheik was to follow him, but only as far as the shore opposite to that of Suez, to take with him my dromedary, and to wait for me there. A few moments afterwards, accompanied by M. Manoula, I embarked in a large boat. The wind being favourable, we were soon across, and I found my sheik and my dromedary lying upon the sand.

I entered Arabia Petræa, through which the traveller passes from Africa into Asia. This tract comprehends, as you doubtless know, that neck of land between the

two gulfs of the Red Sea, which extends to the eastward of the Dead Sea and the Jordan: it derives its name from the quantity of rocks with which it is covered.

It was not long before I repented parting from my janissary. Night overtook us; I was without interpreter; the few Arabic words that I knew were not sufficient to render myself intelligible, and I very frequently needed some one to whom to communicate my thoughts. To me this was a kind of torment, which, till then, I had never suspected. We followed the coast of the Red Sea: my sheik walked in silence by my side. Presently, we were overtaken by some Bedouins, who joined us. A conversation ensued between them and my companion, who drew closer to me; it became extremely noisy, and might have alarmed me, had I not known that this is a constant habit among these people, let them be talking about what they will. It was impossible for me to catch a single word. I imagined, however, that I could perceive, from their gestures and their looks, that my dress was the subject of their talk and their exclamations. For the rest, I had no apprehensions: I knew that when the arm of the sea is once passed, the traveller is safe. Strange Arabs never come to the peninsula of Sinai, because they would run the risk of being seized by the Bedouins of those parts.

At length, after a march of five hours, over rough and stony ground, we discerned some palm-trees, which apprized us that we were not far from the Springs of Moses. Just as we reached the trees, we met a caravan of Bedouins going with charcoal to Cairo. I was instantly surrounded, but merely as an object of curiosity; their respect, their homage, were reserved for my dromedary: he belonged to the viceroy's establishment; and to him, of course, all such demonstrations were due.

Charcoal is one of the principal resources of a great part of the Arabs of the peninsula of Sinai. They make it from the wood of the small trees which they find upon their mountains, and carry it in considerable quantity for sale to Cairo. With the produce they purchase flour, beans, tobacco, coffee, and other necessaries. Their profits are very scanty; a camel-load sells for twenty-

five or thirty francs, at most: and the journey, including the stay there, takes about six weeks. Some gain a living by transporting into Egypt the goods that arrive by the Red Sea at Suez: others, by supplying the caravans with camels.

My people were not to be seen, and I began to be rather uneasy; but, fixing my eyes on the point from which they ought to come, in about a quarter of an hour, I at length discovered Mahomet, my janissary, by his white turban and his red dress: he was at the head of my caravan near a palm-tree. Unluckily, my tent was pitched near the Arabs; their clack during the night was worse than ever; notwithstanding my fatigue, it was impossible for me to sleep.

At daybreak, I went to the Springs of Moses, which were but a few paces from us; they are on the east shore of the gulf, opposite to the valley called the Valley of Wandering, four leagues to the south of Suez. There are eight of them, surrounded by about thirty clumps of palm-trees. Their water is sulphureous, impregnated with gypsum, and disagreeable to the palate, but wholesome for animals; our camels were impatient to quench their thirst with it. To the caravans, which in all ages have made these springs a halting-place, their utility is inestimable. They owe their name indisputably to the great legislator of the Hebrews, who crossed the Red Sea opposite to them.

After visiting the springs, I proceeded towards that sea on which the sun began to fling his first rays. I was opposite to the place where "Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground, and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left." (Exod. xiv. 21, 22.)

I was on the very spot where "the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. And Moses stretched

forth his hand over the sea, and the waters returned, and covered the chariots and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh, that came into the sea after them ; there remained not so much as one of them." (Exod. xiv. 26, 27, 28.)

How shall I tell you, my dear friend, what passed in my soul, when reading the holy Scriptures in sight of that ever-memorable theatre of the infinite bounty of God towards Israel, and of his terrible justice against its enemies! It seemed as though I beheld the twofold spectacle of the great deliverance of a whole persecuted people, departing from Egypt, and crossing the sea dry-shod, under the protection of a high and mighty arm, and of the awful punishment of a whole persecuting people, hardening itself more and more under the strokes of the divine vengeance, and blindly plunging into the waves. I heard this cry of despair burst from Pharaoh and his army :—"Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians !" and those words of God to Moses :—" And they (the Egyptians) shall know that I am the Lord." (Exod. xiv. 25, 18.)

I beheld that sea and that shore covered with wrecks and corses, and, before those corses and those wrecks, relatives, wives, children, looking aghast at their dead Egyptians, and acknowledging the might of His arm whose name is the Omnipotent.

And, like Israel, I was seized with fear, and I " believed the Lord and his servant Moses." And, feelings of the deepest admiration and love mingling with that fear, I resolved that the shore which three thousand years ago rang with the song of thanksgiving sung by Moses and the children of Israel, should hear my voice repeat the same song :—" I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." (Exod. xv.)

O my friend, how the soul expands, how it is lifted above the vain thoughts and the paltry objections of philosophers, in this land of miracles, where, even among an infidel nation, are still preserved traditions of the awful vengeance of the Lord ! This is not the place to

descant on all that incredulity has striven to oppose to the sacred Scriptures, in order to throw some doubt at least on the nature of a prodigy which was witnessed by millions, of a prodigy attested by numerous monuments, by the religious and yearly recurring ceremonies of a whole people whose descendants still live, recorded, celebrated from age to age by writers, by prophets, by kings, by contemporary generations, and without which the history of the Hebrews, their departure from Egypt, and their entire deliverance, would be utterly inexplicable. The dishonesty of most of the enemies of religion has not been able to cope with the overwhelming mass of facts which are connected with this event, and serve for evidences of its truth, and, in its impotence, it has found itself obliged to seek an explanation of it in purely natural causes. It tells us that it was the ebb-tide which saved the one, the flood which engulphed the others; as if the ebb and flood would obey a hand outstretched over the waters, as if they piled up those waters on both sides, prevented them from running off, and made "the floods" stand "upright as an heap!" as if it were possible to suppose that Israel knew, and that Pharaoh, his generals, his officers, his priests, his magicians, all stupidly silly, knew not, what is known by the most ignorant persons, nay, by the very children dwelling on the sea-coasts; as if the gradual movement of the waters during the ebb and flood must not have given, at least to the greater part of those who had the temerity to venture into their bed. time to retire and to escape their pursuit. This I know from experience. While at Suez, I went with M. Manoula, during the ebb-tide, to the distance of at least five hundred paces on the beach, in search of shells, and we convinced ourselves that, however speedily the tide may rise, persons, even on foot, have time to reach the shore, though they may be still further from it than we were.

On returning to my people, I called them together and told them that I had come to the Desert to think of God, who shows himself more propitious to the prayers of the soul which in solitude humbly implores his mercy: I enjoined them, when they had anything to say to each other, to speak in a low tone, and, when once encamped,

to keep profound silence. On these conditions I promised that they should be supplied every night with bread, coffee, and tobacco. They repeated what they had already told me, that, if they talked at night, it was to intimidate robbers. I replied that my janissary and I would attend to that point. They bowed, and, in token of their disposition to obey me, they laid their hands upon their hearts.

I was in the same desert through which all Israel had passed ; I was pursuing, as it were, the same track. On this and the following days, most frequently with the Bible in my hand, I went through, one by one, the various prodigies by which the Lord had guided, fed, clothed, preserved, the immense multitude led by his servant ; that pillar of cloud, luminous at night, dark in the daytime, screening a whole people from the heat of a scorching sun, and marking at dusk the hour and the place for encamping ; that manna, falling from heaven every morning excepting that of the Sabbath-day, to afford nourishment to all ; those garments, uninjured by time or wear ; those waters, which at the prayer of Moses lost their bitterness, and became fit to drink. This long series of miracles were the habitual subjects of my thoughts during the journey to Sinai.

We travelled nine hours without discerning the least vegetation. To the east, we had bare mountains ; to the west the Red Sea. In the course of the day, we found talc in great quantity on our road ; it looked as if strewed with diamonds and fragments of mirrors. So intensely bright were the solar rays reflected from them, that I was frequently obliged to shut my eyes, to such a degree were they dazzled. I picked up a few very fine specimens.

At three o'clock in the afternoon, I took with me an Arab, and, while my caravan continued slowly moving on, I struck off to the Red Sea, from which we were not far distant, to seek on the beach some of the fine shells with which it abounds. I found some splendid specimens, and one that was particularly remarkable ; this I specially recommended to the care of my Arab, at the same time directing him to carry the basket in which I had put them all. He said that he perfectly understood

me, and his cheerful look seemed to assure me that I might rely upon his attention. But scarcely had I proceeded a few steps, after remounting my dromedary, when he came running to me with joyful look, holding towards me my beautiful shell, the numerous spikes of which he had broken off. A burst of vexation escaped me: till we rejoined our caravan, he took it for an exclamation of satisfaction. Nor was it till then that I learned from my janissary that neither of us had comprehended the other: he imagined that I had ordered him to break off one by one the points of my shell, lest they should hurt me, and had lost no time to obey.

On the 20th, I was awake long before dawn. I went out of my tent, and seated myself at the entrance. My Bedouins, at a little distance, were sleeping around some half-extinct embers. At the slight noise which I made their camels raise their heads, but laid them down again immediately on the sand. Silence reigned around me. It was Ash-Wednesday, a day specially set apart by the Church, to remind its members of the curse pronounced against the first man after his fall, and in which his whole posterity is involved. I picked up a handful of the dust of the Desert, marked my brow with it, and, giving myself the salutary warning which it was not possible for me to receive at the foot of the altars of Christ, from the lips of one of his ministers, I pronounced these words:—"Recollect, O man, that dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

Then, joining in spirit and in heart the Christian people, who, on this day more especially, beseech the Lord "to have pity upon them according to his great mercy," I waited for sunrise, meditating upon that awful sentence of death pronounced upon the human race, the execution of which none can escape, and which it will by and by be my turn to undergo. It has often been the case, my dear Charles, that I have felt deeply moved and violently torn from the things of this world, while listening to the powerful words demonstrating their nothingless, issuing from the pulpit amidst the doleful solemnities with which the holy season of penance com-

mences ; but I declare to you that this desert, where the plant itself cannot live ; this soil, which is but dust, and from which the blast sweeps away in the twinkling of an eye all traces of the footsteps of man, telling him that thus shall he be swept away by the blast of death ; this universal silence, not even interrupted like that of the grave by the voice of grief or the song of mourning ; those ruins, and those empty sepulchres ; those carcases of kingdoms and of cities, which had just passed before my eyes ; and that holy Bible, which related to me the crimes of generations upon the spot where they were committed, explained to me the transitory nature, the paltriness, and the term of human life, and showed to me, as still dwelling in the heavens, Him who will have man know that he is the Lord, and that He infallibly overtakes by his justice the presumptuous mortal who disdains his mercy—all this spake to my soul in much stronger language, in a language the energy of which no words can express.

We had a long day's journey before us : the camels were loaded early, and we set out. Nothing was to be seen but the same desert : not the least vestige indicated that any traveller had ever passed that way : only, for the first time since we left the Springs, I saw birds in the distance sailing in the air. Some ravens, perched on the pinnacles of the neighbouring rocks, flew away, scared at our approach. The heat was suffocating, the ground scorching. I was thirteen hours on horseback without alighting. Overcome with fatigue and thirst, I asked for water. At the first gulp, I perceived that it was beginning to become putrid. I had been silly enough to buy new water-skins at Cairo, and to this cause its bad taste was to be attributed. The Bedouins offered me some which they had brought from Suez, but to me it was still more disagreeable than my Nile water.

In the evening we encamped close to an enormous rock of foliated granite, near which were some brushwood and tamarisks. Having taken some refreshment and given a few beans to my dromedary, which I chose to attend to myself, I left my people and went to a hill

at a little distance, to enjoy for a few moments the cool of the evening. The rays of the setting sun, intercepted here and there by the mountains, threw but a faint and shifting light between the chasms of the rocks. Adhering to their promise, my Bedouins were silent, and took their supper quietly around the fire which they had kindled. I availed myself of this profound tranquillity to revert to the important thoughts which had engaged my mind in the morning, and prepared myself for sleep by new meditations on death and the awful eternity that succeeds it. I returned late to my tent.

Next day, from morning till evening, we travelled between calcareous mountains and hills of unequal height, forming beside and before us an immense amphitheatre. In the distance, other mountains, whose much loftier summits were lost in the clouds, bounded our horizon. Most of them were of odd, strange forms. Some seemed to be cloven, others broken in two, and others turned topsy-turvy, as if by an earthquake ; in short, it looked to me like a real chaos of mountains, hills, rocks, stones, rolled one upon another, and nowhere a blade of grass, nowhere the least sign of vegetation.

Nevertheless, about four o'clock we saw a small bird fly past us. The sight of a little bird anywhere else is thought nothing of, if, indeed, it is noticed at all ; but in the Desert, and especially in a desert that is absolutely bare, dry, sterile, where there is no indication of life, you must have felt the peculiar gratification afforded by such a sight, in order to form any idea of it. A little further my people discovered what they took to be the track of a gazelle. We conjectured that there might be a spring in the vicinity, and we were not mistaken. We discovered a few slender rills of a bitter, brackish water, fit at most for cattle : our camels quenched their thirst with it. I could not drink it, though suffering severely from long thirst.

I was more fortunate on the following day. After a toilsome ride of nine hours, which the extreme heat rendered still more fatiguing, we halted in the bottom of a narrow valley, bordered by masses of peaked rocks, in

the clefts of which my Bedouins found water: they immediately brought me some, and, though it was very turbid, I thought it delicious in comparison with that in my skins.

LETTER LII.

Tribe of Bedouins—Bedouins of the Peninsula of Sinai—View of Mount Sinai — Dangerous Road—Monastery of the Transfiguration—Singular way of Entering—Superior and Community—Supper in the Refectory—Exterior and Interior of the Monastery—Mosque—Chapel of the Burning Bush—Relics of St. Catherine—The Empress Catherine—Garden—Distribution of Bread to the Arabs—Library—Edict Issued by Mahomet concerning the Christians—Travellers' Register.

Cairo, March 24, 1833.

On the 23d of February, by daybreak, we had resumed our journey. Three leagues from the valley where we had passed the night, we met a whole tribe of Bedouins, descending from the mountain, with their camels, their asses, and their sheep. As the least sterile part of the Desert affords those animals but a very scanty supply of food, the places where they stop are soon exhausted, and their owners are, consequently, obliged to strike their tents, and to remove and pitch them elsewhere.

The sight of this tribe reminded me of the patriarchs, and some of those scenes of which the books of the Old Testament hand down to us such natural and touching delineations. Methought I beheld Lot retiring with his family, and taking his cattle along with him, because the same tract could not support them as well as those of his uncle Abraham. With the assistance of my janissary, I liked, as we rode on, to enter into conversation with the Bedouins of my retinue about the manners and customs of such of their people as dwell in the peninsula of Mount Sinai; and I derived no slight gratification from hearing

them relate things, which, in more than one respect, correspond with the habits and simplicity of life of the men of the first ages, "laborious, always abroad in the daytime, lodging in tents at night, changing their abode according to the convenience of pasturage, consequently, often employed in encamping and decamping, because they could make but short journeys with so large a train."*

The Bedouins of the peninsula of Sinai are brown, or rather almost black. They are spare, but well made, and in general above the middling height. Their clothing consists of a white woollen shirt with short sleeves, and linen drawers. The shirt reaches nearly half-way down the leg; over it they wear a sort of tunic, likewise of wool, with white and brown stripes, without sleeves, open before, and having slits on the sides to put the arms through. In summer they retain the shirt only, compressing it round the waist with a leathern belt. The head they cover with a white or red turban. Children go bare-headed. The feet are shod with a sandal, fastened by means of a leathern thong or a worsted cord: all of them are bare-legged.

The garments of the women are, like those of the Egyptian females, very long linen drawers, and a blue cloth gown, open at the bosom, with wide sleeves, slit up for half their length. A band of black stuff, eight or nine inches broad, and twenty long, covers the whole face, excepting the eyes. Over that they throw a white veil. They wear necklaces of glass beads, and many of them adorn the instep with clumsy silver rings.

The moveables of these tribes are as simple as their garments. They consist of a tent of brown woollen stuff, which the Bedouins make themselves, a few stones for grinding corn, coffee-pots, an instrument for roasting coffee, an earthenware mortar, to pound it in, and a cauldron. To these articles, to which ordinary establishments are limited, must be added for persons in better circumstances a certain number of woollen sacks to hold the charcoal in which they deal.

* Mœurs des Israélites, p. 12.

With the exception of very small and very rare pieces of ground, encompassed with wretched fences, you distinguish no separate properties in the peninsula of Sinai. One or more camels, a few goats and sheep, constitute the whole wealth of an Arab family. Each tribe settles upon a tract of land not occupied by any other; there it lives, pasturing its cattle, making charcoal, and staying so long as the spot which it has chosen is capable of supplying its wants. Opulence is expressed by the number of camels: he who has none is poor. It is proverbially said of such a one:—"He is poor; he has no camels;" and they add:—"God provides for him; he who has gives to him who has not."

As the cattle are frequently intermixed, and the tents stand open, it is of the utmost importance for the Arabs to instil early into their children a great horror of theft, and to punish that crime with extreme severity. They mention with praise the justice of a father, from whom a goat was stolen by his own daughter. He pursued the culprit into the mountains, and, having found her engaged in cooking the stolen goat, he bound her hand and foot, and threw her into the fire. An unfaithful wife, an unmarried female who has lost her honour, are punished with the same rigour. The execution is not public: the husband or father takes the culprit aside upon the mountain, where the cruel punishment is inflicted.

The general character of these tribes is a passionate love of independence: so far from envying the condition of the inhabitants of towns, they only feel contempt for them. Their minds are imbued with a certain pride, and with some lofty sentiments. Hospitality is so dear to them, that they exercise it even towards their enemies. The Bedouin despises the titles invented by human vanity; that to which he attaches most value is the title of father; as soon as he has a son, he adds the name of the child to his own.

If, on the one hand, the father is extremely fond of his children, on the other, nothing can equal the respect paid by children to the author of their being. Among the Bedouins of my retinue, two are married, and fathers

of families. They are excellent fellows, whose services I have taken pleasure in rewarding from time to time by little presents; and never did either of them receive the slightest gift without raising his eyes to heaven and saying:—"That shall be for my dear mother!" his first thought being of her to whom he owed his existence.

The weapon of the Bedouins is a matchlock; were you to give them the finest European guns, they would not use them. If you explain to them the advantages of the latter, they listen to you with a smile of incredulity and pity. They likewise carry, stuck in their belt, a curved dagger, usually silver-hilted, about two feet long, and double-edged.

While looking at the tribe mentioned in the beginning of this letter passing before me, I could not help remarking, with a feeling of compassion for these poor people, the singular kind of asses which formed part of their train. These animals have an extremely small body and a prodigious head. I cannot give you any better idea of them than by telling you that they are not unlike those little asses grotesquely carved in wood which you meet with at village fairs. What a difference between their form and that of the elegant Egyptian asses! Accustomed to the latter, the hideous appearance of these forced me to turn away my eyes. And yet, how unjust I was! this race is a treasure to the Bedouin of Arabia. It climbs with astonishing facility up the rocks in quest of water; it possesses extraordinary strength, and never tires. The Bedouins assured me that the finest ass of Cairo would be of no use to them for the species of labour in which they employ their's. I have, in fact, seen some of them laden with two large skins full of water, and have been astounded at the agility with which they carried them on the most difficult roads.

We had a long day's journey to go on the 24th, and set out very early. The farther we proceeded, the more numerous were the rocks and stones that we encountered, so that they fully justified the name of Petræa, given to the part of Arabia through which we were travelling.

It was ten days since we left Cairo. Arriving, about

half-past one, on the plateau of a hill, I perceived at last the majestic summit of Mount Sinai, the term of my pilgrimage. I immediately alighted, and, kneeling devoutly, adored, with all the powers of my soul, Him who "decended upon it in fire," to speak to the house of Jacob, to proclaim his law to the children of Israel.

I have frequently had occasion to remark to you that, in certain circumstances of life, in certain situations, the sensations become so keen, and the impressions which they produce are so profound, that human language is incapable of describing them. This I had experienced at the sight of Jerusalem, when ascending Calvary, on entering the tomb of our Saviour, in the grotto of Bethlehem: and again I experienced it in the presence of that sacred mountain.

We were still six leagues from it. As it was impossible to reach it the same day, I ordered a halt at an earlier hour than usual. But, engrossed by the recollection of the events connected with Sinai, instead of going into my tent to rest myself, I passed a considerable time in contemplating it, till I should be able to bow down my face to the dust of its rock.

I spent part of the night in reading Exodus. I have always admired the narratives of Moses: I have read them a hundred times, and always with new delight, with a desire to read them again; and yet I should never have suspected that they could prove to me a source of such exquisite pleasure as they imparted during that happy night.

By daybreak, on the 25th, we were on our way. After a ride of an hour and a half, we lost sight of Sinai, and it was only at long intervals that we again perceived it. It is surrounded by mountains of the most extraordinary aspect; I cannot compare their appearance, from the distance at which we were, to anything but to the waves of the sea, raised to a prodigious height by a tremendous storm, and suddenly petrified. This image, singular as it may seem to you, is the best that I can find to convey a correct idea of the scene before me.

To shorten the route, my Bedouins made me take a road but little frequented, and one of the worst that we

had yet met with. It leads to a defile so steep, that I should not have thought of climbing it, had I not relied upon the excellence of my dromedary. I was surrounded by immense rocks, rising almost perpendicularly, sometimes overhanging, and as alarming for their height as for their bulk. From these masses are not unfrequently detached enormous fragments, some of which, stopped in their fall, remain suspended, as it were, over the head of the traveller ; you expect, at the moment when you are passing, that they will drop, and carry you along with them. Several are not less than fifty or sixty feet thick. This country appears to have sustained, some time or other, the prolonged shock of a violent earthquake.

After a rough and very fatiguing ride of two hours, I found myself in a spacious plain, which terminates in a gentle slope to a stony and narrow valley, amidst which is the famous monastery of the Transfiguration, erroneously called St Catherine's by many travellers. At a distance, it looked to us like a little fortress. Its site is 5420 feet above the level of the Red Sea.*

On reaching the convent, I saw, at a small aperture, some of the monks, who, by means of a pulley, let down a long rope, forming at the extremity a large ring. In this ring I placed myself, and was immediately hoisted up to the height of at least forty feet, and introduced to the community. I might have entered by a door ; for, notwithstanding what has been said, there is one, but it is walled up, and opened only to admit the patriarch, who resides at Constantinople, and whose visits are very rare. The superior of Mount Sinai had apprized me at Cairo of this little aërial trip, and, to spare me the trouble of the ascent, he had had the extreme kindness to offer to give orders that I should be admitted at the door : but I had thought it right to decline such an extraordinary favour. It was not agreeable to my feelings that the monks should take me for a great personage, disguised in the garb of a Trappist : and, on the other hand, the

* The height of Sinai exceeds that of the convent by 2,020 feet, consequently it is 7,440 feet above the Red Sea.

Arabs, whom there is good reason to distrust, and against whom are directed the measures of precaution relative to the introduction of strangers, might have conceived the same idea, and committed some excesses.

The community had been forewarned, six weeks before, of my speedy coming. I was cordially received. I immediately delivered my letters of recommendation to the superior, who loaded me with attentions, and allotted to me a very neat chamber, where, as at St. Saba, there was a picture of the Virgin, before which a lamp was kept burning. To this civility he added that of placing at my disposal Father John of Cephalonia, the only one who spoke Italian, and to desire him to accompany me wherever I went.

When the supper bell rang, I asked permission to join the community; it was granted in the most gracious manner, and I was told that it would, nevertheless, be for the first and the last time. Lent began, according to the Greek calendar, on the following day, and for the first three days the monks were to fast on bread and water. I expressed my intention of joining them in this penance, but I was not allowed; and to my shame I confess that I was not sorry for it. To pass a fortnight in the Desert, to drink bad water, to be exposed to excessive heat, to be perched the whole day on a dromedary, to lie hard at night, to sleep little—all this would have fatigued a younger and more robust body than mine, and I had my hands and face roasted by the sun into the bargain.

The monastery of the Transfiguration is a sort of little village, enclosed by high walls, the stones of which are enormous blocks of granite. The area is a quadrangle some eighty paces every way; and the interior is a mass of irregular buildings, erected after a variety of plans, on very unequal ground. The whole is mean excepting the church, but the utmost cleanliness prevails throughout. One of the things which the traveller, coming from the Desert remarks soonest and with most pleasure, is the abundance of water: that never fails. Besides the springs, which are sufficient for the ordinary supply, there is a well, which dates, it is said, from the time of the patriarchs.

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It is asserted, that close to this well the deliverer of the Hebrews met the daughter of Jethro.

The convent, properly so called, was built in the year 527, by the emperor Justinian. There is still to be seen the edifice which served as a church for the Catholics, and which was wrested from them one hundred and forty years ago by the schismatic Greeks, to whom it now belongs. I could not survey this structure without a feeling of acute pain. Alas! unless heaven comes to the aid of the Catholics, the gold and the intrigues of the Greeks will gradually deprive them of all their sanctuaries, and leave them in possession of not one of the establishments which they have in the East.

In conducting me to the church, the friar pointed out to me a mosque, which, he told me, had been erected for the Arabs formerly employed in the interior service of the house.

The beauty of the church surprised me. It is divided into three naves by two rows of columns of granite, which support a roof, painted blue and sprinkled with stars of gold. These columns, which have been stupidly covered with plaster, belong to various orders of architecture; most of them are of the Corinthian: they date from the commencement of the sixth century.

The whole of the pavement, as well as the walls of the sanctuary, is of white and black marble, brought from Italy, and of good workmanship. The church is lighted by a great number of lamps of silver and silver gilt—presents made by the Russians, because the body of St. Catherine, for whom they have a great veneration, is deposited there. The walls are adorned with numerous pictures, in rich frames; but there is not one, the execution of which possesses any merit.

I was next taken to what is called the chapel of the Burning Bush.

"Now Moses," we are told in Exodus, "kept the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the back-side of the Desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.

"And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked,

and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

"And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

"And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.

"And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

"Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

"And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry, by reason of their task-master . . . .

"Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." (Exod. iii. 1—10.)

It is on the very spot where God manifested his presence by such a miracle, that, according to tradition, the chapel destined to perpetuate the memory of it is built. None is allowed to enter it unless barefoot. The sanctuary is in every respect like those of Palestine: a raised altar, supported by pillars, and under the altar the revered spot.

Pococke asserts that the monks have planted in their garden a bush similar to those which grow in Europe, and that, by the most ridiculous imposture, they hesitate not to affirm that it is the same which Moses saw—the miraculous bush. The assertion is false, and the alleged fact a mere invention.

My visit to the chapel, in which are preserved the remains of St. Catherine, was deferred till the following day. The body of that saint, I was told, was quite entire sixty years ago. Since then, it has been so often removed in order to save it from the depredations of the Arabs, and it has suffered so much from damp, that the principal parts only are now left. Those which are

shown are the head and a hand, in very good preservation.

At ten in the morning, I was conducted with great ceremony to the shrine, which was about to be opened. The superior and the community were at the church: all the lamps were lighted. I had been told that the relics of the saint possess the wonderful property of diffusing around them a fragrant perfume. No sooner, in fact, was the shrine opened than a most agreeable smell proceeded from it. The superior then most respectfully lifted up the head, which was wrapped in cloth of gold, surmounted by a crown, also of gold, attached with great art. The head was quite black. The hand was then drawn forth. It is extremely white. I remarked on the fingers, which still retain the nails, several valuable rings, and among them one of diamonds of great beauty. I was told of a ring of still greater value, and assured that the saint had received it from our Lord himself, and that she had it on her finger when she was discovered on the mountain that bears her name; but it was not shown to me: it is most religiously preserved, and may be touched only by the patriarch. On this subject, the following story was related to me: I repeat it, without giving it to you as an article of faith.

The Empress Catherine had long been desirous to possess this miraculous ring. Such importance did she attach to it, that at length she determined to send an archimandrite with presents to apply for it in her name. Great was the consternation of the Fathers; but, as they durst not refuse anything to so mighty a sovereign, the zealous protectress of the monastery, after much hesitation, it was determined that the envoy should be authorized to take the ring. The shrine was opened with the utmost solemnity. The archimandrite, in magnificent pontifical attire, and arrayed in all the attributes of his dignity, approached to fulfil his mission; but at that moment flames burst from the interior, burned the clerical garments to ashes, and pursued the rash envoy, who saved himself only by a precipitate flight from their terrible vengeance.

On leaving the chapel, the superior had the generosity

to present me with two rings, which had touched the hand of the saint.

I then proceeded by an underground way to the garden of the good Fathers. This garden is scarcely anything but sand, and has but a very small quantity of vegetable mould: a streamlet luckily runs through it, and contributes to render it extremely fertile. Its cultivation is consigned to Arabs, who work under the superintendence of a monk. They raise abundance of culinary vegetables, citrons, oranges, which look well, but are ill-tasted, apricots, apples, pears, and other fruits, of inferior quality, yet in high request at Cairo, where they are sold, and procure some resources for the community. The grapes are better, and yield a tolerably good wine, but in very small quantity.

The monks of the Transfiguration, like those of St. Saba, refuse bread to none: to the women and children are given two small loaves, to the men four, and frequently six. Formerly, the community was obliged to add oil and even money to this distribution; but, the Bedouins having stopped and plundered a caravan of the viceroy's, travelling from Tor to Cairo, Mehemet has relieved the poor Fathers from this burdensome tribute.

In the environs of the monastery, fifty Arab families, belonging to it in some measure, are encamped under tents. They have cattle and camels; for a stipulated price they undertake the carrying of every kind that is to be done for the community; and they also furnish travellers with beasts for riding.

The next day I visited the library. It is still considerable, though it has been robbed at different periods; but the most curious works are gone; very few of the manuscripts, I am assured, are left, and these not of ancient date. Among those to which the Fathers attach high importance is a copy of an edict of the Prophet, addressed to all Christians. The original of this edict, written in Cufic characters on antelope's skin, and signed with the Prophet's own hand, is now in the Grand Signor's treasury. It was originally deposited in the convent of the Transfiguration. In 1517, after the con-

quest of Egypt, Selim I. demanded it, and left in its stead a copy written on parchment and certified by himself. Here follows a translation of it, given by M. Mauchin in his work on Egypt.

"In the name of God, clement and merciful,

"Mohamed ebn Abdallah has issued this edict for the whole world in general. He proclaims that he is the friend of God, and that he is charged with the care of all his creatures. In order that none may plead ignorance, I have written this despatch in the form of an ordinance, for my nation and for all those who are in Christendom, in the East, or in the West, near and afar off, for all who are eloquent and not eloquent, known and unknown. He who shall not follow what it contains, and will not do what I enjoin, will act contrary to the will of God, and will deserve to be cursed, be he who he may, sultan or any other Mussulman.

"If a priest or a hermit retires to a mountain, cavern, plain, desert, town, village, or church, I shall be behind him as his protector from all enemies, I myself in person, my forces, and my subjects; as those priests are my rayas, I shall avoid doing them any injury. Voluntary contributions only shall be taken from them, and they shall not be constrained to pay any. It is not lawful to drive a bishop from his bishopric, nor a priest from his religion, nor a hermit from his hermitage: nothing belonging to their churches shall be used in the building of mosques, or even in the building of the dwellings of Mussulmans. He who shall not conform to this will violate the law of God and that of his Prophet.

"It is forbidden to impose contributions upon priests, bishops, and religious men. I will maintain their privileges, wherever they may be, on land or on sea, in the east or in the west, in the south or in the north: they shall enjoy my privileges and my safeguard against all disagreeable things. Those who shall sow and plant in the mountains and in the sequestered places, shall pay neither tithes nor contributions, not even voluntarily, when the produce is destined for their own subsistence. If they are in want of corn, they shall be assisted with one

measure for each house, and they shall not be obliged to go forth to war, or to pay any taxes.

"Those who possess immoveable property or merchandize, shall not give more than twelve silver drachmas per year. None shall be molested; neither shall any enter into strife with those who follow the precepts of the Gospel, but behave mildly towards them, avoiding all disagreeable things.

"When a Christian woman shall join the Mussulmans, they shall treat her well, and permit her to go and pray in a church, without placing any obstacle between her and her religion. He who does the contrary shall be regarded as a rebel against God and his Prophet.

"The Christians shall be assisted to preserve their churches and their houses, which will assist them to preserve their religion: they shall not be obliged to bear arms, but the Mussulmans shall bear arms for them, and they shall not disobey this ordinance until the end of the world.

"The witnesses who attest the truth of this edict, which has been issued by Mohammed ebn Abdallah, the envoy of God, for all the Christians, and which is the complement of what has been granted to them, are:

"Aly ebn Taleb, Aboubekr Aly Kohafey, Omar ebn el Khattâb, Otman ebn Hassan, Abou el Dasda, Abou Horeyrah, Abdallah Abou Massaoud, Abbas ebn Abdel Motteb, Fodeyl ebn Abbas, Zobeir ebn Aouân, Talhat ebn Obeydallah, Saad ebn Maôz, Saad ebn Obadey, Thabet ebn Kays Mou Khayetmeth, Hachem ebn Ommyeh, Hâreth ebn Thabet, Abdallah ebn Amrou, Ebn el Ass, Amer ebn Yassin, Meazzam ebn Kerachy, Adel Azim ebn Hassan.

"This edict was written by the hand of Aly ebn Taleb, the 3d of Moharram, in the second year of the Hegira, and of Jesus Christ, the 1st of August, 622: it is signed by the Prophet himself. Happy he who shall do, and wo to him who shall not do according to its contents."

I turned over with curious eye the book, or kind of register, in which the strangers who visit the monastery write their names. For a long time past travellers have not been numerous. Sometimes six months elapse with-

out a single visiter. Most of those whose signatures I have seen are English or Germans. Here, my friend, is a copy of the names of some, with the observations appended to each: I transcribe them without remark. It will be sufficient to read what they have written, in order to form a judgment of their sentiments and opinions:—

"Eucher Eloy, French naturalist, coming from Egypt, and going to Mount Lebanon and Constantinople, thence to Persia, and finally to Russia, the 21st of April, 1831."

"On the 9th of September, 1823, arrived here, not to see Mount Sinai, but for an object of utility, Fred. Burckhardt and Charles Falkenstein, from Holstein, with Martin Bretzkee from Moravia."

"Joseph Lane arrived on the 7th of September, 1828, to visit this interesting country. It was his intention to ascend Sinai at once, and to stay only a few days; but the great fatigues which he has undergone, and the unwholesome waters which he drank while crossing the Desert, have made him so ill that he cannot leave the monastery till his health permits."

"At Mount Sinai, at Mount St. Bernard in Europe, I have received the kindest hospitality. In the Alps, among the Catholic monks, my name caused me to be taken for a Protestant; in Asia, among Greek monks, I was known to be of the Catholic religion: a liberal, sublime religion, which teaches men to practise such toleration, such charity.

"Baron Taylor.

"June 19th, 1830."

R. Moresby, commander of the East India Compa-

ny's ship Palinurus, Nander, lieutenant, H. Mooring, surgeon, J. T. Jones, of the Marines, visited these parts so interesting for a Christian, and read the Decalogue on the most elevated point, where, it is said, the Law was given to Moses."

"Dr. William Holt Kater, of London, arrived at this convent, in company with Mr. Bradford, on the 5th o October, 1829; and left it on the 8th, to go to Cairo, and thence to Syria. They have been exceedingly gratified with their sojourn in this interesting country. The world is a kind of book, of which he has read but the first page who has seen no other than his native land."

"This is the third time that I have been at this monastery.

"Martin Bretzkec.

"April 15th, 1826."

"Captain Don Manuel Valdes Alquer, in the service of H. M. Ferdinand VII. King of Spain and the Indies, visited these holy places with the liveliest pleasure in the month of February, 1824. He confesses that, with great admiration, he has deeply felt in his soul the marvellous things which it pleased God to do by the hand of his servant Moses.

"Long live the king, whose subject I am!"

"J. Cohen, of the United States of America, arrived at the convent on the 4th of September, 1832: and left it on the 7th, to proceed to Syria, through the Desert leading to Gaza. He has been visiting the four quarters

of the globe, has ascended Mount Sinai, and been kindly received by the inmates of the monastery."

Adieu, my friend: my next letter will conduct you with me to the top of Sinai.

LETTER LIII.

Departure for Sinai—Ice and Snow—Chapel dedicated to the Prophet Elijah—Top of Sinai—Ruins of Churches—Mosques—Clift of the Rock, in which Moses was placed till the Glory of the Lord passed by—Mount St. Catherine—Return to the Monastery—Valley of Rephidim—Mould of the Golden Calf—Rock from which Moses produced Water—Excavations formed by the Water in the Rock—Excursion in the Desert surrounding Horeb and Sinai—Preparations for Departure—Last Conversation with the Superior.

Cairo, March 27th, 1833.

My journey in the Desert, my dear friend, had so fatigued me, and my legs were so stiff from the position in which I was obliged to keep them while upon my dromedary, that I could not walk without great difficulty. After some days' rest at the monastery, I could not think without apprehension that, to reach Sinai, I had yet to climb steep rocks, without the slightest trace of a road. However, I mustered courage, and determined to conquer all obstacles, even though I were obliged to climb by the aid of my hands. On the 1st of March, at daybreak, I set out for the holy mountain, accompanied by a monk, an Arab, and my janissary.

The ascent commences about four hundred paces from the monastery. It is extremely rough, steep, and the more fatiguing, inasmuch as it is composed, in a manner, of nothing but slabs of foliated porphyry and sharp frag-

ments of rocks. We had, moreover, to encounter heaps of ice; and the snow, in some places, was so deep that it was a real labour for us to clear a passage through it. After ascending for an hour, I could go no farther. Notwithstanding the severity of the weather, and a very cold wind which was blowing, I was bathed in perspiration, so that I was glad to have recourse to the snow to cool and refresh me. Never do I recollect to have felt such lassitude. However, the recollections, the thoughts, of my faith came to my succour; they prevented me from yielding to the feeling of my weakness, and my efforts increased in proportion to the obstacles.

All around us looked dull and dreary; all was solitude and silence: not a trace of verdure upon the blocks of granite that rose above the ice and snow by which we were surrounded.

Midway we came to a chapel dedicated to the prophet Elijah, and in which is the cave where he lodged, after journeying forty days and forty nights unto Horeb, the mount of God.

"And he came thither," says the Scripture, "unto a cave, and lodged there; and behold the word of the Lord came unto him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?

"And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life to take it away.

"And he said, Go forth and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And behold the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and break in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake.

"And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

"And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering of the cave; and behold there came a voice unto him and said, What does thou here, Elijah?

"And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life to take it away." (I Kings xix.)

I know not, my dear friend, whether it has ever been the lot of any of those scholars and men of science, who have the misfortune to neglect, to despise, the important science of salvation, and to prefer to it the vain knowledge upon which pride feasts itself, that knowledge which can be of service for a few moments only in the rapid course of life—I know not, I say, if it has ever been their lot to climb Mount Horeb, to visit the cave of Elijah, with Bible in hand, to read there the words which I have just placed before you, and to confront them with the present state of the surrounding scene, with the rent mountains, with the rocks cloven, broken in pieces, thrown down; but if such has been their lot, if indifference or incredulity has left ever so little honesty and sincerity at the bottom of their soul, I doubt if, after reading this passage—if, after such confrontation, they can help paying homage to the truth, by exclaiming:—

Yes, the Lord hath passed by;

And a great and strong wind hath rent the mountains, and broken in pieces the rocks before the Lord;

And after the wind an earthquake;

And after the earthquake a fire.

The astonishment, the awe, which seized me at so grand a sight, was succeeded by an agreeable surprise. Before the chapel of the prophet, amidst bare and sterile rocks, we saw a magnificent cypress majestically lifting its head to the height of forty feet at least. As I was very weary, I rested myself for a moment at its foot.

From the cave of Elijah we continued our arduous ascent over the snow, against a north wind, which blew with violence. At length, the sight of the venerable summit revived my courage, and seemed to impart new strength. In another hour, all my wishes were gratified. My soul, in the transports of a joy which effaced all impressions of the long fatigues of the journey, forgot

the entire world, to dwell deliciously upon these thoughts :—

"I am on that sacred mount, where the Lord came to Moses in a thick cloud, 'that the people might hear when the Lord spoke with him, and believe him for ever ;' on those very rocks where, 'in the morning there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud ;' on that Sinai, which 'was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire, and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly :' on that Sinai, where, 'when the voice of the trumpet waxed louder and louder, Moses spake and God answered him by a voice.'" (Exod. xix.)

And, overcome with religious awe, I knelt down : my lips were pressed to the holy rock, and long did I remain prostrate, adoring in silence the infinitely merciful God, who, out of love to Israel, had deigned to come down from the heavens to Sinai, to give his law : and, after humbly thanking Him for the continual blessings with which his bounty had accompanied my pilgrimage, with uncovered head, my hand upon my heart, and my eyes uplifted to heaven, I pronounced aloud those words which he spake : "I am the Lord thy God," &c. Not a sound interrupted my voice, which was wafted over the rocks of that profound solitude : all nature seemed to listen in silence to the oracles of its divine Author !

On the summit of Sinai are seen the ruins of two Christian churches, one of which was called the church of the Transfiguration. There is also a mosque erected by the Turks in honour of the lawgiver of the Hebrews, for whom they entertain such veneration that they never call the mountain by any other name than Gibel Mousa, which signifies the mountain of Moses.

But of all the objects which the aspect of Sinai presents to the astonished eye, none strikes it more forcibly than that which reminds the speetator of the following passage in Exodus :—

"And Moses said unto the Lord . . . . . . Wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight ? Is it not in that thou goest with us ? So

shall we be separated, I and thy people from all the people tha are on the face of the earth.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken; for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.

"And he said, I beseech thee, show me the glory.

"And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.

"And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me and live.

"And the Lord said, Behold there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock.

"And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock; and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by." (Exod. xxxiii. 16—22.)

Now, my dear friend, this clift in the rock in which Moses was put, where the hand of the Lord covered him till his glory passed by, subsists to this day; it is still easy to be recognised four thousand years after the circumstance recorded by the inspired historian. There is not a traveller but may see it: my eyes have seen, have contemplated it, and my mind, in unison with my heart, paying homage to the veracity of the holy Scriptures, thanked heaven for the privilege of being permitted to take a close view of that which for so many others must be an object of faith.

The ruins of the churches have somewhat raised the borders of the "clift," but they are easily distinguished from the rock, which is a very hard granite. I entered it, and remained there some time; and with a stout hammer it took me nearly half an hour to break off a few small fragments.

I had carried with me an excellent telescope, and reckoned upon the pleasure of exploring the wide-extended prospect. I committed this instrument for a few minutes to the care of the monk who accompanied me. While I was engaged in knocking off the bits of granite, he was curious to see what was inside, and em-

ployed force ; the lenses were broken, so that it was totally useless. You must have been in a similar position to that in which I found myself, to be able to conceive the vexation which this accident occasioned me. It affected me the more because I had no means of repairing the mischief.

Opposite to Sinai is Mount St. Catherine, whose summit, loftier than any of that chain of mountains, rises to the height of 8,452 feet above the level of the Red Sea. A rock is there to be seen on which, it is said, there is the impression of the body of the saint, which lay there for several centuries. It is frequently visited by Russian and Greek pilgrims, and sometimes even by women. I must have sacrificed a day had I gone thither. The bad state of the roads, worse than those which I had already traversed, the cold, the ice, the snow, the wind, all contributed to induce me to relinquish the design.

I passed three hours on Sinai, and, like the apostles on Tabor, Lord, said I, it is good to be here, and I would fain have pitched a tent there. My guide and the good monk apprized me that we must think of returning. Several times they had to repeat this warning, and I, falling once more on my knees, promised God to be faithful to him, vowed to "have no other gods before him," and we departed.

It had taken us four hours to ascend : we performed the descent in three. I arrived at the monastery much less fatigued than I had expected.

Next morning, at eight o'clock, I went down from the convent with the monk who was directed to accompany me. He took me to the valley of Rephidim, to the place of the Temptation, as it is called, to show me the miraculous rock, from which Moses caused water to gush forth by striking it with his rod.

"And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the Lord, and pitched in Rephidim ; and there was no water for the people to drink.

"Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said

unto them, Why chide you with me? Wherefore do ye tempt the Lord?

"And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?

"And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod wherewith thou smotest the river take in thine hand and go.

"Behold I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb, and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

"And he called the name of the place Massah, (that is, temptation,) and Meribah, (chiding or strife,) because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord with us or not?" (Exod. xvii.)

By the way we stopped at a rock, in which my guide showed me a hole that, he said, is, according to tradition, the mould of the golden calf, cast by Aaron for the Israelites while Moses was on Sinai. Father Sicard, who examined this hole very closely, and measured all its proportions, expressly says that he remarked in it the figure, not of an entire calf, but of the head with the muzzle and the horns; and it is true that even to this day you may perceive some resemblance to it. But one serious objection, that gives rise to doubts on this point, which to me appears very reasonable, is that this pretended mould, hollowed out of granite, being three feet in diameter, and as much in depth, we must suppose that the entire calf had the colossal proportions of an elephant, an inference that would scarcely harmonize with the Scripture account.

The rock which tradition designates as that from which Moses caused water to burst forth presents characters of truth far more striking. I know not that I have

ever seen in my life monuments verifying, in a more convincing manner, the facts of antiquity which they commemorate. Figure to yourself, upon a dry, sterile soil, destitute of plants of every kind, and in the environs of which not a drop of water is to be found—figure to yourself, I say, a prodigious block of granite, fourteen or fifteen feet high, ten wide, and fifty at least in circumference, detached from the mountain, and lying in the valley, among other considerable fragments of rocks, which in the course of ages the hand of Time has loosened and hurled down.

"This rock," says a traveller who has visited the spot, and whose philosophic opinions leave no room to suspect him of a wish to favour revelation, "this rock has, in its vertical surface, a gutter about ten inches wide, and three and a half deep, crossed by ten or twelve channels about two inches deep, formed by water resting on the softest part of this block, which the monks and the Arabs call the 'Rock of Moses.'"

This description, I admit is perfectly correct; excepting that the words *in the softest part* are inaccurate. The block, on the contrary, is so hard all over, that, after redoubled blows for a whole hour, we could scarcely break off a few small fragments: the hammer that we used was of iron, and very strong; it was, nevertheless, bent, from the resistance it met with.

A more remarkable circumstance, not mentioned by the author whom I have just quoted, is that to this day the spot where this rock stands is called by the Arabs Massal and Meribah, names nearly the same as those of Massah and Meribah, assigned to it in the Hebrew Scripture, and signifying *strife* and *temptation*.

The Bedouins attribute a miraculous virtue to the excavations which the water has formed in the granite of the rock; they lay upon them the grass which they go far and near to collect, before they give it to their camels when those animals are ailing.

On my return to the monastery, when I had to place myself in the ring of the rope by which one is hoisted up, I could not suppress the same apprehensions that I had felt on the first day—apprehensions which were re-

newed whenever I had occasion to ascend or descend. If the man who turns the windlass to which the rope is attached were to let go, if the rope were to break, or if you did not hold fast, or should happen to faint, it would be all over with you.

I spent part of the 3d in exploring the desert surrounding Mount Horeb and Sinai—a desert formerly inhabited by thousands of anchorites. I was accompanied by Father John of Cephalonia, my usual guide, and Father Neophyte of Candia : the latter understood Greek only, and unluckily neither of them was capable of satisfying me on the points that most interested my curiosity. I should have been glad to learn from their lips the minutest details tending to make me better acquainted with a land of wonders, which exhibits in everything so strange a character; but I could obtain from them no more than what is related by most of the Christian travellers, and was obliged to content myself with noting my own particular impressions. I had already observed those masses of scattered rocks, and those mother-rocks, from which they were detached, cloven and ready to suffer other masses still more enormous to escape from their bosoms; and, contemplating them anew, anew I found myself filled with awe. All around me produced feelings of melancholy and terror. Silent beside the two monks, who themselves surveyed with emotion that scene to which, nevertheless, their eyes were accustomed, methought I was witnessing the first throes of that convulsion of Nature, which, as the sacred Scriptures inform us, will mark the last days of the world: and, to banish the terrors excited by this idea, I had need to recollect that the glory of the Lord had passed there; that there it had been manifested to Israel; that there had been published the holy law ; that there, amidst the fearful concomitants of that promulgation, lightnings had made the mountains smoke, and rent their bowels.

I then climbed the Horeb, and tarried a long time on the spot where Moses is said to have stood when he saw the burning bush. The prospect from that point is admirable, and not to be compared with any other. I had on my left Mount Sinai, majestically lifting its sacred

summit to the skies; about half a league below me, in a deep and narrow valley, I beheld, as though at my feet, the *fortress* of the monastery of the Transfiguration, the despair of the Arab, who covets what it contains, while measuring with disappointed look the walls which to him are inaccessible; farther off, in the garden of the convent, my eye fell upon the lofty cypresses, whose verdure renders the bare rocks surrounding the monastery, and projecting their enormous flanks into the Desert, still more dreary: on the right, the view extended over the country, traversed by the children of Israel when they came to Mount Sinai; over the plain in which they encamped when God gave his law to Moses; and, beyond that plain, covered with yellow and withered bushes, over the vast amphitheatre of mountains by which it is bounded.

Seated on the rock, I gave free scope to my thoughts: memory rapidly reviewed both the miracles of the loving kindness of God to his people, and the prodigies of ingratitude of that same gross and carnal-minded people: never had I so strongly felt the enormity of the backslidings of Israel, which turned to idolatry at the foot of these mountains. I saw amidst the camp the sacrilegious altar erected by Aaron; I saw the abominable idol, and the victims, and the holocausts offered to it; and the multitude forgetting the Lord, who had delivered them from the bondage of Egypt, some sitting down to eat and to drink, others joining in senseless rejoicings, in impure dances. I beheld Moses hastily descending from Sinai, breaking the tables of the law in the transports of a holy indignation, and the sons of Levi, armed with swords, passing and repassing through the camp, from gate to gate, slaying, every man, his brother, his companion, his neighbour; I heard the cries of the guilty falling beneath their strokes. And, at the same time that I recognised in this spectacle the justice of the divine vengeance, I was confounded at the excessive blindness and ingratitude which could overlook the most signal, the most recent, benefits; and, in order to understand so strange a mystery, I felt impelled to fall back upon myself, to sound the wickedness of my own heart, till I was forced

to acknowledge that, still more ungrateful, after favours not less signal conferred by the Lord, it had but too often adored strange gods, the gods whom the world adores; happy to have found, on the day of my repentance, in the hands of the Levites of the new law, instead of the sword that slays, the cross of my Saviour, his mercy, and my pardon.

On the 4th, my camels having arrived, I occupied myself almost exclusively with preparations for my departure. In the morning, I went to the chapel of the burning bush, and then passed a few moments before the tomb of St. Catherine. The monks were performing the service. While at my prayers, my attention was diverted by an angelic voice, whose sweet and harmonious tones formed a striking contrast with the singing of the other ecclesiastics. I thought that I could discover in its execution the style of the Italian school, favoured by a supple and sonorous organ; and I was the more struck by it, because nothing is more uncommon among the Greeks of these countries. On leaving the church, I asked one of the Fathers who was the singer that had so delighted me. "There he is," replied he, pointing to a person a few paces from us. "But," added he, with some asperity, "he had better hold his tongue, or conform to the custom of the community for divine service." Now, you must know, my dear friend, to judge from what I have heard, it is the custom of the community to sing with a nasal twang, which has a most disagreeable effect. I made an effort of politeness to avoid showing that I was of a different opinion.

In the evening, I took leave of the community, nearly all the members of which were assembled. Their number is from forty-five to fifty: among them are several from seventy to eighty years old, but who are so hale and healthy that they appear to be scarcely forty: the oldest is ninety-six, and shows all the vigour of youth. So excellent is his sight that he reads without spectacles, and, in the duties which he performs, he is a model of activity and punctuality to his brethren. This soundness of constitution arises not only from the tranquillity, the simplicity, the regularity of life, observable in all

these communities, but also from the purity of the air which is breathed in these parts. Some of the Fathers, however, have rather exaggerated notions on this subject: they assured me that if a person infected with the plague were to enter their house, he would not communicate the disease to any of its inmates. I know not whether they have ever made the experiment. My incredulity betrayed itself in a smile, which only excited pity. For the rest, all of them accepted in the kindest manner the expression of my gratitude for the hospitable attentions which I had received from them.

In a last conversation with the superior, after having more particularly expressed my thanks to him, I ventured to ask two or three questions of interest concerning his community. I had read somewhere or other that there is an Arabic printing-office in the convent: I inquired if this was the case, but he replied that the statement was erroneous. I adverted to the considerable expense that must be occasioned by the keeping up of so many buildings belonging to the monastery, the church, with its thirty chapels, their ornaments, &c.; and I declared my astonishment that he could provide for everything. He entered complaisantly into the detail of the numerous resources afforded him by the devotion to St. Catherine, a devotion universally prevalent among the Greeks; he told me that donations arrived from very remote countries, even from India; and, after a long enumeration, he added, with emphasis: "Our walls might be of gold, if we had all that the piety of our brethren has sent us, and that the violence of the Arabs has wrung from us." He related to me, on this occasion, that very recently, before Mehemet Ali seized the throne of Egypt, the monastery was exposed to daily vexations, from which very often the monks themselves suffered not less than their funds. Several fell victims to their devotedness to the interests of the house, and are considered as martyrs; their remains are deposited in a particular chapel.

The monks make no charge whatever for the hospitality which they afford to pilgrims and travellers, but they reckon upon a donation, and I have not heard that in this expectation they have ever been disappointed.

On writing my name in the Strangers' book, I put down my tribute, much less in conformity to the custom than from a deep sense of the attentions, the civilities, and the respect which had been paid me.

LETTER LIV.

Departure from the Monastery of St. Catherine—Brutality of the Janissary to a poor Bedouin—Camel-Drivers—Hurricane—Remarkable Echo—Indisposition—The Red Sea—Loss of a Crucifix—Passage across the Arm of the Sea opposite to Suez—Mahometan Pilgrims going to Mecca—Official Phenomenon called Mirage—Arrival at Cairo—Departure of the Caravan for Mecca—The Camel.

Cairo, March 30, 1833.

I LEFT the monastery of the Transfiguration very early in the morning of the 5th of March, and not without regret. Father John of Cephalonia, and Father Neophyte of Candia, from whom I had already received so many marks of kindness, insisted on doing me the honour to accompany me to the distance of a league from the convent.

No sooner had I loosed the rope by which I was let down, than I was surrounded by Bedouins begging alms. To get rid of the most importunate of them, Mahomet, my janissary, gave him a thump on the head. I warmly reproved him for it, and ordered him, by way of reparation, to carry himself a few pieces of money, in my name, to the person whom he had struck: he hesitated for a moment, but finally obeyed.

The same camel-drivers who had brought me were there, and eagerly offered their services to take me back. They had become attached to me during the former journey, and would have been much vexed if others who also applied to me had been chosen in their stead. I gave them the preference the more willingly, because, setting

aside the annoyance occasioned at first by their everlasting clack—a fault which, as I have told you, one finds in all the Arabs—I had every reason to be satisfied with their conduct. They persuaded me to take for the return another and a longer route, but, according to them, a better than that by which we had come to Mount Sinai. I soon began to think that I should not have so much cause to congratulate myself upon the change as they pretended: rocks, stones, sand, a few camels wandering about in quest of a scanty subsistence—this was all that we saw during the first days.

The 6th was a very harassing day. We proceeded ten leagues directly in the teeth of a most furious wind. I had the greatest difficulty to keep my seat on my dromedary, and my hat was torn to tatters. Mahomet. notwithstanding his skill, had like to have been dismounted, and for a time I thought that we should not be able to resist the violence of the hurricane. It was still worse in the evening, when I attempted to pitch my tent: ten times it was blown away, and carried to the distance of forty or fifty paces; nor did I succeed in fixing it at last till I retired under the shelter of a rock, at some distance from the place chosen by my people on account of the bushes. To increase our discomfort, it was impossible either for them or me to make a fire. It was not till the night was far advanced that the gale abated.

Next morning, on awaking, great was my surprise when, having called my Bedouins, I heard an echo—the very finest, perhaps, that ever struck my ear—repeat my words most distinctly. It gave me the greater pleasure, inasmuch as the effect was wholly unexpected, and, instead of calling my men a second time, I began to cry in the joyousness of my heart: "Jesus! Mary! Joseph!" And the echo, repeating the slightest inflexion of my voice, responded, "Jesus! Mary! Joseph!"

Transported with delight to hear a Mussulman rock keep chorus, and wishing to prolong so exquisite a pleasure, I commenced the *Salve Regina* at the top of my voice, and sang it from beginning to end; the echo singing along with me, and sending my words afar over the Desert, with admirable fidelity. My Bedouins lis-

tened in silent astonishment; they seemed to share my ecstasy, and that they might not interrupt it, instead of coming to me, they waited patiently until I rejoined them.

On the 9th, I felt much more fatigued than usual. I was afraid that I should not be able to proceed, but be obliged to halt before the accustomed hour. It was only with great exertion that I reached the place where we were to pass the night. My people lost no time in preparing my tent: I had a paroxysm of fever, with palpitation of the heart. Apprehensive lest I should be incapable of continuing my journey, my mind was filled with anxiety: I sorrowfully asked myself what would become of me, if I were to grow worse, if I were to be laid up, far from all assistance, left alone to the mercy of a few Arabs, amidst a desert. Then remembering me of our Father who is in heaven, I returned to better thoughts; I adored his holy will, I committed myself with confidence to his hands, and he granted me the grace to comprehend that, for a monk whom his vows have for ever separated from the world, there is not less happiness, and there may be more glory, in dying on pilgrimage upon the sand of a desert than in yielding up his soul upon straw and ashes, amidst the attentions and the prayers of his surrounding brethren. Night brought some rest: at dawn the fever had ceased; I found my strength recruited, and gave orders for our departure. In the afternoon, at a moment when, engrossed by the recollections of the preceding day, I was thinking of anything but what was before me, I perceived the Red Sea, which I supposed to be yet at a great distance. To my heart this sight was like dew to the dry and parched soil: it refreshed, it soothed it; my pains were lightened, and the day's journey was performed with much less difficulty than I had expected.

Very early on the following morning, I took two of my Bedouins, and, armed to the teeth, I set out with them, impatient to reach the sea-shore that same day. I had directed Mahomet, who was to come after me with the camels, to wait for me at the Springs of Moses, where I intended to rejoin him, and to pass the night. The

sand fatigued our beasts exceedingly; in some places they sank up to the middle of the leg; we nevertheless arrived betimes at the shore. I immediately alighted, and hastened to pick up the finest shells. At the moment of starting again, I missed the crucifix which I constantly carried about me. Had I left it behind, in the morning, when packing up my baggage?—had I dropped it by the way?—had it been stolen?—I knew not what to think. I could not help feeling this loss very severely: it affected me to such a degree as to make me forget everything else. For many years it was at the foot of this crucifix that I poured forth all my troubles; it was my support in illness, my dearest companion in travel, my comfort, my happiness. I had frequently lost, but always recovered it; and the last time, having left it at the Holy Sepulchre, it had been sent after me to Jaffa. On the present occasion, I had the less hope of seeing it again, as I might have dropped it in the sands, and it might, perhaps, have already fallen into the hands of some Arab. I lost no time in rejoining the Bedouins of my caravan. I called them together around me, and informed them of the loss that I had sustained; adding, that my crucifix was not of gold, as some might have imagined; that, not supposing any of them capable of stealing it, I should send in search of it, but that, if it were not found, I should know what measure I had to take. After this address, I despatched the one in whom I had most confidence, with orders to follow the track which we had taken, to go back to the spot where my tent had been pitched, and thence to proceed to Suez, where I would wait for him. He immediately set out, taking with him water and provisions for two days.

Scarcely was he gone before a young negro who travelled with us came and earnestly solicited permission to accompany him, and to assist him in the search. This application appeared extraordinary: less than that would have sufficed to awaken my suspicions. I might, in my turn, have asked his permission to examine his pockets; but I deemed it more Christian-like to give him his share of the provisions, and to let him go: from that

moment, however, I had no doubt that I should recover my crucifix.

We passed the night at the Springs of Moses, where we found, as on our former visit, a great number of Bedouins. The weather was dreadful; we had wind and rain for the greatest part of the night.

At daybreak, the camel-drivers who had charge of my baggage started, by my direction, to make the circuit of the isthmus by land; while I, to spare two hours' journey, resolved to cross the arm of the sea opposite to Suez. I luckily met with a bark laden with skins full of water, which was going to the town, but she lay at some distance from the shore, and could not approach any nearer. I was obliged to submit to be carried on board. The Arabs, concluding from my dromedary that I was a person of distinction, and reckoning in consequence upon a handsome *bakschisch*, gladly took me upon their shoulders, and carried me in triumph through the water, shouting and singing with all their might, raising and lowering me, according to the cadence of their melody, and caring little whether, in these alternate movements, they plunged my clothes into the water or not. You may judge how impatient I was to be released from their grasp; indeed, I did not breathe freely till I was on board the bark.

At Suez I found an extraordinary concourse of Mahometan pilgrims, who had come thither to embark for Tor, and to proceed thence to Mecca. The streets were encumbered with tents, camels, and baggage. The curious crowd was struck by my costume; several eyed me with a look of fear; others kept pace with me for a longer or a shorter distance; while some even followed me to the house of M. Manoula, agent to the East India Company, where I alighted, and where I was received with great cordiality.

The Bedouin and the Negro who had gone in search of my crucifix had not arrived: I was obliged to sacrifice the following day in waiting for them. In the morning, taking advantage of the ebb-tide, I went with my host, my janissary, and two fishermen, to pick up more shells and beautiful sea-crabs on the beach, which was left dry

by the receding water. In the afternoon, my men arrived. They had had a very long excursion, following as closely as possible, sometimes together, at others separately, the traces of our camels; and the negro, in one of the moments when he was alone, had been lucky enough to find upon the sand the object to which I attached such value. This at least was his story, which the Bedouin had the good nature to attest on the report of his companion. More incredulous myself, I put the less faith in this account, as I had beforehand discovered the combination and its results: still, as on such occasions it may be dangerous to suffer the person who has forfeited his own esteem to perceive that he must no longer reckon upon that of another, instead of revealing to him all that I thought, I chose rather to affect a belief in his honesty, and to punish him only by awarding to him no other recompense but thanks, persuaded that the reproaches of his conscience would not permit him to charge me with ingratitude.

Impatient to reach Cairo, I left Suez on the 13th, at four in the morning, and hastened our march as much as possible. One new circumstance alone struck me in this trip: this was the optical phenomenon to which natural philosophers give the appellation of *mirage*, a phenomenon which produced upon me, as it does upon all who are unacquainted with it, an extraordinary effect, that it is difficult to describe. On the 14th, in the forenoon, the sandy plain of the Desert, at a certain distance, appeared to be transformed into an immense and boundless sea. As we advanced, the trees, the houses, the villages, all the objects which rose at a distance above the surface of the soil, seemed to float in this ocean, whose waters fled at our approach: and the illusion was so complete, so strong, so like reality, that, but for the aid of reflection, I could not possibly have guarded myself against the erroneous impression made upon my senses. To the traveller, harassed by fatigue, parched by the heat of the sun, and panting with thirst, this deceitful appearance sometimes becomes a cruel aggravation of his torments. A new Tantalus, he beholds what he takes to be water receding before him with the more rapidity the

more he exerts himself to reach it, in the hope of quenching his thirst.

At length, on the 15th, after a march of sixteen hours, we arrived at Cairo. The whole city was in commotion. It was the day of the departure of the great caravan for Mecca: there was universal rejoicing. The carpet which the capital of Egypt is accustomed to send annually to the tomb of the Prophet was carried in procession through the different quarters of the city; and, everywhere, even at the gate by which we had to enter, the crowd was immense. My janissary, with his silver-nobbed cane, threatened to no purpose. We despaired of being able to proceed, when the Egyptian officer on guard, perceiving our embarrassment, detached a few soldiers who cleared a passage for us. When we had got out of the crowd, I directed Mahomet to take the least frequented streets, but still it was not without difficulty that we proceeded to the monastery of the Franciscan Fathers. I had the good fortune to find there the Austrian vice-consul and numerous friends, who, glad to see me again, congratulated me on the success of a journey in which they had taken a warm interest, and loaded me with tokens of civility and friendship.

I will not conclude the account of my peregrinations in the Desert, without fixing your thoughts for a few moments on one of the wonders of the divine goodness, of which I have not yet treated; but which, ever since my departure from Cairo, my gratitude has not missed celebrating for a single day, and which will ever occupy a place among my fondest recollections. It is the wonder exhibited by the camel to every one who has closely observed that animal, to every one who has had opportunity to study its destination, and to learn, were it only from the experience of a few days, of what importance it is to the people of the East. Among all the species of animals subject to the will of man, there is not one which shows in a more striking manner that paternal Providence which has been pleased to proportion its gifts to human wants: to adapt the beasts of burden, their shape, their size, their strength, their way of life, in short, all their qualities, not excepting even their colour,

to the countries for which they are made, and to the different purposes to which they are destined to be applied. A hundred times, while thinking of the man who has the misfortune not to recognise the Author of all things in his works—a hundred times have I inwardly said: Oh! if that man could but see what I have seen, how would he admire what I admire! And, if ever so little of that light which enables us to perceive causes in their effects were left in his mind; if ever so little of that disposition of every upright and honest heart to love that which is good were left in his heart—how would he, at sight of the camel and its manifold utility, turn from the wretched sophistries of a vain and ungrateful science, to lift himself to God, to pay homage to his power, his wisdom, and his goodness, to adore, to glorify, and to bless him!

Endued with the qualities most suitable to the climate in which he is placed, the camel is to the Arab a more inestimable treasure than the riches, the gold, and the silks of the East. Accordingly, the Arab calls him the holy, the sacred animal, and is attached to him with a fondness mingled with respect: he knows that without this servant he could neither clothe himself, nor travel, nor traffic, nor even live. "Figure to yourself," says Buffon, "a country without verdure, without water, a scorching sun, a sky ever serene, sandy plains, mountains still more arid, over which the eye wanders without being able to descry any living object—a country inanimate, and flayed, as it were, by the winds—exhibiting nought but bones, loose scattered stones, rocks standing or overturned, a desert entirely bare, where traveller never rested in the shade, where nothing accompanies him, where nothing reminds him of living Nature; an absolute solitude, a thousand times more awful than that of forests, for trees themselves are beings to the man who finds himself alone; more isolated, more forlorn, more lost, in these limitless wastes, he everywhere sees space as his grave; the light of day, more dismal than the shades of night, returns only to show his nakedness, his impotence, and to display to him the horror of his situation, cut off by the abyss of immensity from the habitable earth; an immensity which he would in vain attempt

to traverse—for hunger, thirst, and scorching heat, divide all the moments that are left him between despair and death.

"And yet, with the assistance of the camel, the Arab has found means to pass and to appropriate to himself these chasms of Nature, which afford him an asylum, insure his quiet, and maintain his independence."

And yet, with the assistance of the camel, the philosopher of the temperate climates or even of the cold regions of the north, relieved from the dread of cruel privations, of insurmountable obstacles, has been enabled to pursue his inquiries for the benefit of science amid the burning sands of the Desert and the rocks of its mountains, to explore remarkable places, to determine their position, to measure their extent, or to calculate their height.

And yet, with the assistance of the camel, for visiting the sacred summits of mountains where the voice of God was heard of old, the humble pilgrim, frequently without any other resource than the tribute of charity which he has collected by the way, has been enabled to pursue the same tracks free from the apprehension of being burned by the sun, or, after experiencing the torments of parching thirst and consuming hunger, encountering a death of excruciating agony.

And I, too, my dear friend, with the assistance of the camel, notwithstanding the weight of years, notwithstanding the debility of a constitution worn down by the toils and troubles of a long agitated life—I, too, have been enabled happily to accomplish my pilgrimage, and to escape all dangers.

If I were here to repeat to you my good friend, what has been written upon the camel by the most celebrated travellers, and even by such of them in whom the contemplation of the works of the creation is least likely to awaken thoughts of the God by whom they exist, you would be surprised to see how, struck by the evidence of the gift, they have praised, extolled the bounty of Providence which has placed so valuable a quadruped at the service of man. But I prefer laying before you what has been said on the subject by one of the philosophers of our times, known for his hatred of Christianity and its

doctrines ; you will there see with still greater astonishment how he has been forced to speak—he, a writer whom the mere idea of God annoys ; who, lest he should awaken that idea in the mind of his readers, avoids the mention of Him, and yet shows in spite of himself how he is haunted by it, in the care which he takes to substitute everywhere the name of *Nature* for that of its Author, to transfer to the one the power and intelligence of the other; as if the word *Nature*, taken in an absolute manner in such a signification, were not the most absurd and the most senseless that exists in any language whatever.

"In those tracts of the Desert, where the soil is rocky and sandy," says Volney, "the rains cause the seeds of the wild plants to sprout, reanimate the bushes, the ranunculuses, the wormwoods, the kalis, and form in the bottoms spots upon which reeds and grasses spring forth. The plain then assumes a smiling look of verdure ; it is the season of abundance for the cattle and their owner ; but, on the return of the heats, everything is dried up, and the soil, dusty and of a grayish colour, affords nothing but dry stalks as hard as wood, which neither horses nor even goats can chew. In this state the Desert would be uninhabitable, and man would be forced to leave it, if *Nature* had not attached to it an animal with a constitution as strong and habits as frugal as the soil is sterile and ungrateful—if *she* had not placed there the camel. *No animal exhibits so marked and so exclusive an adaptation to its climate ; one would say that a* PREMEDITATED INTENTION *has been pleased to regulate the qualities of the one by those of the other. Destining* the camel to inhabit a country where he should find but little food, *Nature* has economized matter in his whole construction. She has not given to him the plumpness of form either of the ox, or of the horse, or of the elephant : but, confining him to what is strictly necessary, *she* has placed a small head without ears at the end of a long, fleshless neck ; she has withheld from his legs and thighs every muscle not absolutely requisite for moving them ; lastly, *she* has given to his spare body only those vessels and tendons that are necessary for binding his frame together.

She has furnished him with a strong jaw for masticating the hardest food, but, lest he should consume too much, *she* has made his stomach small and obliged him to ruminate. *She* has provided his foot with a fleshy cushion, which, slipping upon mud, and being unfit for climbing, allows him to travel only on a dry, smooth, and sandy soil, like that of Arabia; lastly, *she* has evidently destined him for slavery, by denying him every sort of defence against his enemies. Destitute of the horns of the bull, the hoof of the horse, the tusks of the elephant, and the speed of the stag, what has the camel to withstand the attacks of the lion, the tiger, or even the wolf? Hence, in order to preserve the species, *Nature* hides him in the bosom of vast deserts, where the scantiness of the vegetation attracts no game, and the want of game keeps away voracious animals. It was requisite that the sword of the tyrant should drive man from the inhabited earth, in order to cause the camel to lose his liberty. In passing to the domestic state he is become the means of dwelling on the most ungrateful soil. he alone supplies all the wants of his owners; the milk of the she-camel feeds the Arab family under the various forms of curd, cheese, and butter; and frequently his flesh, too, is eaten. Shoes and harness are made of his hide, garments and tents of his hair. By his means heavy loads are conveyed from place to place. Lastly, when the earth refuses forage to the horse, so valuable to the Bedouin, the camel supplies the want by its milk, at the cost of only a few stalks of brambles or wormwood, or some pounded date-kernels. Such is the importance of the camel for the Desert, that, were he to be withdrawn from it, the whole population of which he is the sole pivot would be banished from it too."

Such are the observations on the camel of one who carefully kept aloof from his thoughts and his pen the very name of God, as too alarming for his pride: and who thought to deliver himself and to deliver others from all fear and from all remorse, by teaching that "faith and hope are ideas without reality, the virtues of dupes; that charity is an exaggeration, and prayer a corruption of morality."

Grave and serious as is the camel when at a certain age, so playful and frolicsome is he when young. We had one three weeks old, which followed its dam : it was full of fun, a real wag. We were excellent friends. It played with me, and I played with it. When I tried to approach it, it would skip away, and be gone in a moment : if I pretended not to notice or to drive it, the little creature would immediately come to provoke me. The dam was most attentive and affectionate : while she was suckling, nothing in the world could have parted her from her young one, or made her stir : she saw nothing else ; she forgot hunger and thirst, in order to tend it. Witnessing every day these demonstrations of maternal love, how could I help exclaiming with a feeling of admiration : O providence of my God !

The dromedary differs from the camel only in this, that its form is lighter, its legs smaller, its hair finer. Mine, like all of its species, in the long run, surpasses in speed the best Arabian horse. While travelling, I was never tired of admiring him. Once, in order to quicken his pace, I was going to strike him, but my hand refused to obey. At the mere tone of my voice, he would kneel down that I might mount or alight with the greater ease. If I chanced to let fall my handkerchief or my prayer-book, or the bridle slipt from my hand, he would instantly stop of his own accord till I had got hold again of the latter, or till some one reached to me what I had dropped. Wishing to return expeditiously from the sea-shore to my caravan, I urged him more than usual ; he turned his head towards me and looked at me with a faint cry, as if to apprize me that we had still a great way to go, and that if I made him move any quicker, it would be impossible for him to carry me to my destination.

Morning and evening, when our camels were grouped around our caravan, I took pleasure in visiting and caressing them ; but I always returned in preference to my white dromedary which lay at the door of my tent. I deputed to no other the care of feeding this faithful companion of my pilgrimage : it was I who gave him from time to time some of the beans which I had brought expressly for him ; he knew my voice, and seemed to un-

derstand me; I paid him particular attention, which he remarked, and for which he appeared grateful. Though he could endure thirst much longer than myself, I frequently shared my water with him, heedless of the difficulty of obtaining a fresh supply. He would drink, looking at me with eyes in which I fancied that I could discover a sort of thankfulness. I have parted from him, and I must confess with regret; because no animal has reminded or ever will remind me more forcibly of the infinite goodness of God to man—that goodness which the philosopher, *without faith, without hope, without charity,* stupidly attributes to Nature.

LETTER LV.

Journey to Upper Egypt—Return—Colonel Prokesch—Visit to Mehemet Ali—Executioners—Massacre of the Mamelukes—Mosques of Cairo—The Koran—Corpus Christi Day.

Cairo, June 8, 1833.

I have just come back from a long and arduous journey, a journey wholly unforeseen, and of which I had no thoughts when I last wrote to you. I have come from the extremities of Upper Egypt, the limits of the ancient Roman empire. I have been to the first cataract of the great river, and my farthest steps have touched Nubia. Twenty times during this excursion I have wished to write to you; twenty times I have taken up the pen, and as often my recollection of the absolute impossibility of transmitting my despatches to you has caused me to lay it down again.

On my return from Sinai, the essential object of my pilgrimage was fulfilled: I had seen the places dear to my faith, and my heart was satisfied. I then thought only of returning to Europe with my recollections, and

with all the precious memorials for Christian piety that I had been able to acquire, and of repairing to my monastery to bury myself there once more. I had even begun to make preparations for my departure, when an unexpected circumstance caused me to suspend them, and to defer the execution of my intentions.

The Count d'Estourmel was here for a few days, with Messieurs de Gontaut, his nephews. Having travelled through Greece and part of Asia Minor, these gentlemen were making arrangements for visiting Upper Egypt: they proposed to me to accompany them, and urged me to do so by all the motives that extreme good nature, I might even say friendship, could suggest. I hesitated at first. A pilgrim, a monk, unable at my age to cast a look upon the future, without thinking of the necessity of making good use of the little time that is reserved for me in the secret decrees of Providence, in order to prepare myself for another journey, whose success, of infinitely greater importance, can alone insure the felicity to which I aspire; for my participation in the above-mentioned plan, I could plead nothing but the gratification of a curiosity perfectly reasonable in itself, to be sure, but perhaps less legitimate for me than for persons who have not entirely broken with the world, or bidden it farewell for ever. These considerations raised scruples in my mind. Some pains were taken to remove them, and, I must acknowledge, successfully. With a superior understanding and extensive attainments, M. d'Estourmel combines the most amiable manners and exemplary piety. He remarked that the opportunity was such as could never offer again; he represented that Thebais, so interesting to the philosophic inquirer, is not less so to the Christian; that it reminds us of the heroes of Christianity not less than of those of the pagan religions, and of our great God not less than of the absurd divinities of Egypt. I suffered myself to be persuaded, and went.

I have just visited with him those Egyptian cities, most of which, after filling the pagan world with the renown of their grandeur, their power, their wisdom, and their arts, seemed doomed to oblivion, till modern Science went to awaken their glory, slumbering under the dust

of ages. Dendera, Thebes, Carnac, Luxor, Esné, Edfou, Hermontis, Ombos, Syene, the isle of Philoe, &c., have successively shown to me all that is curious, extraordinary, and magnificent, discovered in our days by the most celebrated European travellers in such of their monuments as Time has respected, or the relics of which it has spared. I have closely surveyed their astonishing ruins, the gigantic master-pieces of their architecture, those colossal figures, those obelisks, those palaces, those temples, those chapels, those lofty walls covered with inscriptions, basso-relievos, and paintings, those columns, those sphynxes, those hypogeums, those tombs, that bespeak conceptions and efforts, of which one would not conceive either the genius or the strength of man to be capable. I have lodged, I have taken my meals, I have slept, in those subterraneous halls, beneath those sepulchral vaults where lay the Pharaohs—those Pharaohs, who sought by all the means which their power afforded to insure the inviolability of their tombs, and whose tombs were, nevertheless, violated by greedy hands, which rummaged their embalmed bowels in search of hoarded gold, and then scattered abroad their mutilated relics. I have even saluted that famed statue of Memnon, so celebrated in history: I seated myself before sunrise on his enormous knees, but in vain I solicited from him some of those harmonious sounds, which, according to the ancient traditions, issued from his granite bosom; and which, as Tacitus relates, were heard by Germanicus.

My eyes, too, have wandered afar over those deserts, which, in the first ages of the Church and even in the time of the persecutions, were peopled with cenobites and anchorets—over those deserts where dwelt, in fasting, in mortification, in the austerities of the severest penance, the Pauls, the Hilarions, the Macariuses, the Pachomiuses, and their innumerable disciples. I have penetrated into some of those caves, hollowed out here and there, some by nature, others by the hands of the recluses, and which were so many cells for them. I have contemplated, with a satisfaction mingled with sadness, those ruins of monasteries and of ancient churches; and especially these

arid sands, those rocks, the vast theatre whither thousands of Christians repaired, to devote long years of their life to the meditation of celestial things, to pray to God, to combat their passions, to purify their hearts, and to exhibit to the most superstitious people on the face of the earth the wonderful sacrifices, and the virtues which the true religion is capable of inspiring.

My intention, let me tell you at once, is not to enter here into details, and to load this letter with long descriptions too foreign to my subject. That task belongs essentially to those who write for science, and it has been already performed by men of such eminent merit, that it will henceforward be difficult to surpass, perhaps even to equal them. Whenever you wish to acquire anything like a correct knowledge of Upper Egypt, turn to the works of the *savants* who accompanied the French expedition to the East; consult the publications of a Jomard, a Denon, a Champollion, and there you will find unrolled the vast picture of the things which I have seen and admired.

Nevertheless, my dear Charles, I shall not quit this subject without declaring to you that, great as has been my admiration, the impression that I have most suddenly and most strongly felt, that which most frequently recurred at the sight of the Egyptian temples, was an impression of pain, of grief, of pity, produced by the strange contrast between the magnificence, the majesty, of those incomparable edifices, and the vanity, the nothingness, of the absurd gods to whom they were erected, and who were adored in them.

The Egyptian who appears so great, when you see him only in his mightiest works, appears but what he is—petty, abject, stupid—when considered in the objects of the worship to which those works belong. No nation disparaged the Deity more; none so disgraced and degraded humanity. More superstitious than the others, it was not content with prostituting its worship to certain idols common to several nations, to Apollo, to Mercury, to Bacchus, to the impure goddess; with it the ibis, the ichneumon, the bull, the crocodile, the dog, the cat, a multitude of land or aquatic animals, according to Lucian

and Juvenal, plants and culinary vegetables, came in for their share of divine honours. This extravagance, so deplorable, so criminal in the sight of him who has the happiness to know the true God, and feels how much it must offend Him—this extravagance, I say, was carried to such a length as to be ridiculed by the world, though itself idolatrous, and, what is particularly worthy of remark, pagan philosophy, less indifferent or less exclusively infatuated with the arts than that of our age, formed its judgment of the Egyptians, not so much from their monuments as from the disgraceful absurdities of their superstitions.

On my return to Cairo, I received testimonies of kindness and friendship the more cordial, because a report had been circulated that I had fallen dangerously ill at Thebes. The good Franciscan Fathers, with whom I continued to lodge, vied with each other in their inquiries concerning me, and in the expression of their joy at my safe return. The Catholic clergy, the vice-consul of Austria, and most of the consuls of the other nations,* came to congratulate me, and to lavish upon me demonstrations of interest which deeply affected me. I could not have had a more agreeable surprise than to meet with colonel Chevalier von Prokesch, distinguished as a soldier, a diplomatist, and an author; whose German work, entitled "Recollections of Egypt and Asia Minor," has been extremely useful to me. The colonel is come to Egypt on a particular mission from the emperor of Austria to the viceroy; and to this fortunate circumstance for me I am indebted for the pleasure of making his acquaintance.

My satisfaction was somewhat disturbed by the too speedy departure of M. d'Estourmel. I had flattered myself that his stay would be prolonged till I could accompany him on his return to Europe. The daily intercourse which had subsisted between us for nearly two months, his amiable disposition, and an entire conformity

* The vice-consul of France, whose politeness to me I cannot sufficiently acknowledge, was desirous that I should take with me a memento of him. He has made me a present of a superb crocodile, about nine feet in length, which he killed himself in Upper Egypt.

of sentiments and ideas, had endeared him to me. I parted from him with regret.

Mehemet Ali was at Cairo. I went, in the first days, accompanied by the Austrian vice-consul to pay my respects to him. He had just concluded peace with the sublime Porte. His palace was crowded by a multitude of people, among whom were to be seen distinguished personages. As soon as he perceived me, he made a sign that I should be permitted to approach. After I had made my obeisance, he invited me, as at the time of my first visit, to sit down by his side. I complimented him on the advantageous peace which he had obtained, and on the increase and consolidation of his power, and reminded him of my prediction on that subject. He appeared to recollect it, and thanked me, but with a look which betrayed dissatisfaction, and a kind of embarrassment. It was easy for me to judge that this peace was not sufficient for his ambition, that the idea of getting to Constantinople haunted him and embittered his life.

As we were leaving the court of the palace, Mons. B., who had joined us, said to me in a very low and mysterious tone: "Did you observe the two men sitting in a little niche, yonder, quite close to the door?"—"No," I replied, and, without waiting for any explanation, I abrubtly turned back. I saw, in fact, two Arabs, one of whom appeared to be about fifty years of age, and the other twenty-five. Both were smoking gravely and in silence, with their eyes fixed on the staircase leading to the apartment in which his Highness was. I stopped a moment to survey them; they perceived it, and, without saying a word, darted at me a terrible look. I hastened back to Mons. B., and begged him to inform me who were these two men. "They are the executioners," said he, "waiting to be called. There was a time," he continued, "when their services were very frequently required. But Mehemet Ali, more circumspect and less greedy of vengeance, has left them more leisure since the slaughter of the Mamelukes, by which he horribly signalized the first years of his power."

We were on the very spot where that frightful carnage took place. Mons. B. described to me its most

deplorable and bloody scenes. Though well acquainted with some of them, I could not listen to him without shuddering. One shudders, too, at the mere thought of the consequences to be anticipated from such perfidy and cruelty, if ever the power of him who has not been ashamed to sully himself by them should begin to totter.

It is impossible, my friend, that so atrocious an event, with the rumour of which Europe rang from one extremity to the other, can be absolutely unknown to you; but perhaps you may not be acquainted with the details of it. If you would form a just idea of the character of the Mussulman hero, whose character and government certain persons seem to think it their duty to extol, read those which M. Mangin, an impartial writer, has been at great pains to collect.

I have not yet said anything concerning the numerous mosques at Cairo: I intended to have noticed them before my departure for Sinai, but time did not permit me. The city contains nearly four hundred, some of which are remarkably elegant and beautiful, but they are almost all in a dilapidated state. Their cupolas and minarets give them an appearance at once noble and graceful. The largest and most magnificent date from the ninth century, and even earlier. The most remarkable are the mosque of El Azhar, that of El Hakem, and more especially those of Hassan and Tholoun, which surpass all the others in magnitude, regularity of architecture, and the delicacy of their decorations. The last, which is compared with the finest buildings of this kind at Constantinople, is falling to ruin, and there seems to be no thought of repairing it. Wishing to see the interior of some of them, I visited three, last week, in company with M. Prokesch and five or six foreigners: we were conducted by government *carvas*.* It is not an easy matter for a foreigner to gain admission into a mosque, especially at the hours of prayer. None is allowed to enter but in the Turkish dress, and without shoes: we were obliged to conform to the law. Our

* The *carvas* are Turks who now supply the place of the janissaries. Each of the consuls has several of them. Mahomet, whom I have continually called my *janissary*, was a *carva*.

carvas strongly recommended to us to keep absolute silence, lest our language should betray and compromise us. On two occasions our disguise and our precautions were completely successful: we had time not only to admire the porticoes, the arcades, the columns, the galleries, the sculptures, but also to observe the motions and the attitudes of the congregation during prayers. We saw neither altars, nor images, nor figures, nor any of those religious signs which betoken Christian churches. These Mahomet most expressly prohibits. The men were below, the women in the galleries, kneeling upon carpets: some were squatting on their heels, turning their heads every now and then to the right and to the left, and that, as I was told, to salute the Prophet. The iman pronounced the prayer, which the people repeated, nearly word for word, and accompanied with inclinations and prostrations, the number of which is fixed for each exercise.

In the largest mosque, which we visited last, an immense congregation of the faithful was assembled. No sooner had we entered than our conductors became alarmed at the marked attention which our presence all at once excited. They earnestly besought us to retire, and we complied, not so much for fear of what might befall ourselves, but to avoid bringing them into the danger which they seemed so much to dread on their own account.

You must not conclude from this circumstance that Mussulman fanaticism is still what it was some centuries ago, and what the Koran would have it to be:* that would be a mistake. Fanaticism prevails not to such a degree except in the ardent votaries of Islamism, whose number is daily decreasing, and among the lowest class of the people. The intercourse of Europeans with Egypt having become extremely frequent, is constantly tending to diminish its violence, and I may even add that the Crescent is on the wane. The religious law of Mahomet,

* "Fight against the unbelievers," says the Koran, "till all false religions are exterminated. Put them to death; spare them not; and when you have thinned their number by dint of slaughter, reduce the rest to slavery, and crush them by tributes." See chapters 8, 9, and 47.

of which the sophists of the 18th century set themselves up for apologists, which the hot-headed revolutionists of France, in 1793, extolled as superior to Christianity, and which some modern travellers have not blushed to declare *reasonable*, has in itself no principle, no character of durability. It cannot establish itself but by the sword, which lent its force to the imposture ; it cannot maintain itself but by the oppression, and especially by the ignorance, to which it dooms its votaries : now that ignorance is clearing away, though but slowly, and it will become more and more impossible to bring back men's minds to it. So long as the prohibition to engage in literary and philosophical studies was strictly observed, Islamism could not but be formidable. Now, letters and philosophy are penetrating on all sides into the East ; and already unequivocal signs are manifesting themselves as the forerunners of a moral revolution which must change its aspect. It is not yet one hundred years since the Mussulmans, princes and people, had a horror of printing, and proscribed all our books, from the apprehension that some of them might introduce our ideas and shake the faith in the Prophet. At the present day, our books, nay, our newspapers, are imported, circulated, and find numerous readers. With the intellectual activity which agitates and hurries on nations, with that universal greediness, that thirst of wealth, which torments mankind, with that continued series of commercial enterprizes and speculations, whose importance and extent are incessantly giving rise to new relations, and multiplying them to infinity, how would it be possible to prevent that communication of ideas, that action of books whose influence upon religious creeds is felt even when treating of matters the most foreign to such subjects ! And if in Mahometanism, to say nothing of the absurdity of some of its most mischievous dogmas, there were nothing but that shameful morality of corrupted hearts, which, as it has been remarked a thousand times, always supposes that two persons of different sexes cannot be together, or look at one another, without meditating crime ; if, in this morality, there were nothing more than polygamy, the captivity of women, the right to shut them up, to repudiate them

upon the slightest pretext, or without any pretext whatever; the right to make eunuchs, the right to doom the conquered, men, women, and children, to slavery; the right to use, to abuse, them as beasts of burden and instruments of lasciviousness; if, lastly, this morality merely served to consecrate the despotism of the sovereign, established and proclaimed absolute master of the property, the liberty, the life of all—a despotism which, with its horrible consequences, springs from the Koran, according to the confession of Volney himself, as a natural and inevitable effect—I ask you, my dear Charles, can such a state of things, such doctrines, or, to speak more correctly, such barbarism, subsist long without the conditions which have upheld it? can it long withstand the elements of ruin which have crept into it, develop themselves in its bosom, and act the more efficaciously, inasmuch as the result which they are destined to produce is much less in the combinations and the will of man than in the dispositions of Providence?

The Franciscan Fathers have celebrated Corpus Christi day with all the pomp that can accompany so holy and so august a ceremony in an infidel land. The solemn procession took place in the interior of the convent, where an altar was erected and decorated with the most elegant simplicity. Several Catholics attended it, and walked with profound devotion after the clergy. After the last benediction, which concluded the service as I thought, what was my surprise, and what pleasure it gave me, to hear the choir sing the *Domine salvum fac imperatorem!* This is a tribute of gratitude which the good Fathers pay with all their hearts to our beloved sovereign, under whose protection the monastery is placed. I deemed myself happy to be able to mingle my voice with their's, and I joined with my whole soul in their prayers, beseeching the Lord to hear us whenever we invoked him in behalf of the best of princes.

Farewell, my dear friend. A few days longer to arrange my affairs, and to visit, if possible, one or two establishments that I wish to see, and then I shall hasten my return to Europe. My next letter will probably be dated from Alexandria.

LETTER LVI.

Return to Alexandria—Travelling Plans—Cardinals Gregorio and Pedicini—Indiscretion—Farewell Visit to Mehemet Ali—Mummy—Crocodile.

Alexandria, June 16th, 1833.

I HAVE been in Alexandria ever since last week, my dear friend. After an absence of two years and long peregrinations, it is a pleasing thought to me that I am approaching Switzerland, and returning to brethren whose exile I have shared, with whom I have passed days of such perfect and pure tranquillity. Great as is the distance that yet parts me from them, it sometimes seems as though I were already in their midst: but as yet I know not when the moment that shall crown my wishes will arrive. I am impatiently waiting for some vessel bound to Malta, where I expect to perform quarantine. Thence, if nothing happens to thwart my plans, I shall go to Naples, and then to Rome, whence I shall proceed by the shortest route to St. Urban, where I hope to learn tidings of our poor exiles.

The motive which determines me to visit the capital of the Christian world, is to lay at the feet of the sovereign pontiff the homage of my profound veneration and my warm gratitude for the touching kindness with which his Holiness complied with the requests that I ventured to make to him previously to setting out on my pilgrimage, and for the high protection which he has condescended to afford me. My heart also feels a longing to see once more those members of the sacred college with whom I was a prisoner in the castle of Vincennes, and who are yet living, the cardinals Gregorio and Pedicini, men eminently distinguished for learning and piety, who gloriously confessed the faith when in fetters, and whose noble firmness and sublime resignation merited the admiration not only of the Catholic church, but even of those who do

not belong to it. Seized unjustly and contrary to the law of nations, in a foreign territory, by the order of him to whose yoke France was then subject, and thrown into the same prison with these illustrious captives, to the example of their virtues I owed the courage to bear as a Christian the iniquity to which, like them, I was a victim. They honoured me with their friendship, and I wish them to learn from my own lips, if possible, how religiously I have preserved the remembrance of it.*

The day before yesterday, I played a prank which might have cost me dear. Colonel Prokesch, who, after I had left Cairo, came to this city to wait for a vessel to take him to Trieste, was to sail in an Austrian brig. I had accompanied him on board. The vessel had still several things to take in; and the captain assured me that he should not leave the harbour before six in the morning. I retired, promising the colonel and his aid-de-camp, captain Kudriaffsky, to come back and bid them farewell; and I took the precaution to retain a boat for the purpose.

In performance of my promise, I repaired very early next morning to the harbour with M. Babich, chief dragoman of the consulate. But, to our great surprise, the brig was already at sea: we saw her sailing in the offing.

* At the moment when I was writing this, I had no doubt that cardinal Pedicini was the same person as the abbé Cosimo Pedicini, an ecclesiastic of extraordinary merit, who was my fellow-prisoner at Vincennes. To the kindness of one of the most respectable members of the sacred college, I am indebted for the information that this is a mistake. The cardinal never was in France. The abbé Cosimo Pedicini, my companion in misfortune, was secretary to cardinal Pacca, with whom he continued till his death.

Among the distinguished persons whose captivity I shared, and whom I should have been very sorry not to meet with, had it been possible for me to go to Rome as I intended, I shall here mention with a deep feeling of respect and gratitude the illustrious and venerable Father Fontana, since created cardinal by Leo XII., and taken from the Church in 1822. It was chiefly in my conversations with this learned and holy ecclesiastic that I learned to know all the importance of the destinies of man. It was principally the example of his virtues and the lessons of his wisdom which made me feel the nothingness of all that I had till then been pursuing, and seriously turn my thoughts to the only important things, those of eternity.

There was but little wind, and that unfavourable: I had no doubt that by rowing lustily we should soon overtake her. The boatmen were of a different opinion. They made some remonstrances, but to no purpose; I turned a deaf ear to them, promised a handsome gratuity, and away we went.

The boat, which belonged to a vessel from Trieste, was small, but manned by four stout seamen. Induced by my promises, they rowed with all their might: it soon fell quite calm, and in a few hours we found ourselves alongside the brig, which had perceived us. M. von Prokesch, his aid-de-camp, and the crew, were lost in astonishment. "I promised," said I to the good colonel, "that I would come and take leave of you. You see that I am a man of my word." He thanked me with emotion. "But," added he, "it is a very great imprudence to come so far, and it might involve you in serious danger." And, fearing lest the calm should not last till I could reach Alexandria, he begged me to hasten my return.

Standing up in my boat, I continued for a long time to salute with my hand or my handkerchief those excellent officers with whom I had passed such agreeable hours. Then, when I could no longer see them, came reflections on the freak that I had played. Did it become a monk of La Trappe? As an excuse for it, I repeated on this occasion what I had said to myself on a hundred others, that the religious life acts more upon the heart than upon the head, and that it almost always leaves to the mind the character which it has received from Nature. At any rate, I am an evidence that this is sometimes the case. Notwithstanding my age and my toils, I am as brisk as I was at thirty; and as to the dangers that I have defied in my time, what you have just read is only a repetition of what I am going to relate to you.

Their majesties the king and queen of Naples had just married their daughter Christina to the duke of Aosta, afterwards king of Sardinia, who died a few years since. The situation of the royal family at that time prevented it from giving any splendid festivities on the occasion: but, on the day that the august couple were united, the

queen, whose spirit was generous and great, married and portioned one hundred young women.

The moment of parting was painful. The queen was exceedingly affected ; and the princess Maria Amelia, in particular, who had never before been separated from her sister, and loved her dearly, appeared inconsolable. The good king had but a single man-of-war left—the Tancred. In this ship the royal couple embarked for Cagliari. Two English frigates accompanied her.

The day after they had sailed, having called upon the queen, I found her at her window, watching with a telescope the ship that was conveying two persons so dear to her heart. When I had the honour to approach her, "Look," said her majesty, "look ! how my children must suffer !" The sea was, in fact, very rough, and the Tancred old and a bad sailer.

No sooner had I left the princess than I drove off to the dock-yard. With great difficulty and by the offer of a large reward, I hired six men and a boat, and off we instantly went to the Tancred. It was not till the first wave broke over us that I recollected that I was in a court-dress,* and that, too, in the Hungarian fashion, that is to say, booted and spurred, and with a sword by my side. Conceive my vexation, my dear Charles, on perceiving that I was without cloak ; for my chivalrous costume—forgive the expression—and my arms were of little use against the assault of the element. We had not been a quarter of an hour at sea before I heard one of the men say to his comrade : *O m'inganno molto, o siamo qui sette matti*—"I am greatly mistaken if we are not seven madmen." I affected not to understand him.

After prodigious efforts we approached the ship, whose deck was covered with people. But how was I to get on board ? My boat, sometimes high, sometimes low, according to the motion of the waves, was liable to be dashed against the Tancred, and in that case we must be lost. At length, however, I was upon the deck. I was surrounded, and made known that the Baron de Geramb had come to inquire how their royal highnesses did. I

* The author was then chamberlain to the emperor of Austria.

begged permission to pay my respects to them, and was immediately introduced. The princess was in bed, suffering severely from sea-sickness: the prince and two ladies, seated by her, appeared much fatigued. "Her majesty," said I to their highnesses, "is very anxious to learn how you are, and I am come to inquire, that I may let her know." The prince and princess expressed their thanks, and said many gracious and flattering things. "We cannot allow you to leave us in such dreadful weather," they added; "it would be too dangerous. You shall come with us to Cagliari, whence you may return safely in our ship or in one of the English frigates." I thanked their royal highnesses in my turn, and represented that, as nobody knew where I was, my absence would occasion painful anxiety, especially to my son; and besides, the object of my voyage, which was to tranquillize the queen, would be unaccomplished. Upon these representations they consented to my return.

I reached Palermo, after luckily escaping more than one danger, but drenched to the skin. Taking no more time than was required to change my clothes, I hastened to give the queen intelligence of her august children. Her majesty already knew where I had been. Closely watching the Tancred, she had perceived the boat, and had no doubt that I was in it. After a few rebukes for my temerity, she condescended to say: "I cannot help scolding you, my dear Geramb; but be assured that I appreciate this new pledge of your attachment,* and that I shall never forget it."

Among the curiosities that I have brought from Cairo, besides the crocodile, which I have already mentioned, there is a superb mummy. I intend to take it on board with me, but it is not certain that I shall be able to do so. In this particular, seamen are so superstitious that scarcely one captain could be found in a hundred who would allow it to be shipped. In case of unfavourable weather, a contrary wind, a storm, the mummy would

* In 1805 and 1806, the author commanded in Austria, a volunteer corps raised at his expense, which bore the name of the empress Maria Theresa, daughter of the queen of Naples.

be the cause of it; the mummy would have drawn down the curse of heaven. It must be thrown overboard: by keeping it, you would be sure to bring upon the vessel fresh and perhaps irreparable calamities.

Mehemet Ali left his capital almost at the same time that I did. Being informed of his arrival here, I thought that I could not avoid paying him a farewell visit. I went yesterday to his palace. Rumour had already told him of my crocodile and my mummy: he made them for a moment the topic of conversation. "Your highness," said I, laughing, "I am persuaded that a traveller returning from Egypt cannot decently show his face in Europe without a mummy in one hand and a crocodile in the other." This piece of pleasantry tickled him much, and gave me reason to suspect that he is pleased to see us natives of the West attach so much value to Egyptian *relics*.

Our consul-general, the excellent chevalier Acerbi, has not ceased to load me with civilities and kindness. He has placed at my disposal his library, and his collections of minerals and shells, which are extremely beautiful. My most agreeable moments are spent in examining them, especially when I can at the same time profit by the instructive conversation of the consul—a pleasure which business does not allow him to afford me so frequently as I could wish.

P.S. At length an opportunity offers for Malta: it is a Maltese brigantine, called Le Coradino, from Constantinople. She will, probably, sail in less than a fortnight.

LETTER LVII.

Passage from Alexandria to Malta—Quarantine—Bishop of Malta —St. Paul—History of Malta—Knights of St. John of Jerusalem —Dissolution of the Order—Prudence of the English at Malta —General Ponsonby—Marquis of Hastings—Mr. Frere—Remarkable Objects at Malta.

Malta, September 25th, 1833.

I LEFT Alexandria, my dear Charles, on the 8th of July at nine in the morning, after bidding adieu to some friends, and pressing to my heart the excellent chevalier Acerbi, whom I shall never forget.

Our captain and crew were but sorry seamen. Luckily, we had on board M. Besson, a Frenchman, *chef d'escadre* in the service of Mehemet Ali, the same who undertook to convey Bonaparte to America after his defeat at Waterloo. The advice of this officer, a very clever and not less amiable man, was of the greatest utility to us during the passage.

On the thirteenth day we came to an anchor in the harbour of Malta, and on the following day I entered the lazaretto. The building appropriated to this purpose is magnificent: it is a house formerly belonging to the Order. According to the regulations, I was to perform quarantine for twenty-one days: I obtained a reduction of it to twenty. During this kind of imprisonment, which seemed very tedious, I had the honour to receive several visits from the Austrian consuls, the chief vicar-general, and the private secretary of the bishop of Malta, archbishop of Corfu, a prelate of great piety and distinguished merit, to whom I was recommended by a letter from the sacred congregation. The presence and the conversation of those gentlemen enabled me to await more patiently the day when I should be set at liberty. At length it arrived. The secretary came in the bishop's carriage to fetch me, and took me forthwith to the episcopal palace. I begged permission first to pass a moment in the chapel, to thank God for our prosperous voyage,

and then went to pay my respects to the bishop, who had had the attention to invite me to dinner, and to ask the Austrian consul and a large party of the clergy and nobility to meet me. The venerable prelate received me with extreme kindness, and loaded me with civilities. He took pleasure in inquiring the particulars of the long pilgrimage which I had just completed, and appeared to feel great interest in them. An apartment had been prepared for me by his direction at the monastery of the barefooted Carmelites. When I was retiring, he begged me in the most amiable manner to remember that his palace and carriage were at my disposal, and directed a person to accompany me to the good Fathers, where a truly cordial and paternal welcome awaited me.

Malta, which the ancients called Melita, on account of the abundance and the excellence of the honey produced there, was originally but an almost bare rock, inhabited by barbarians. After it had belonged to the Carthaginians, it fell under the dominion of the Romans, and was in their possession at the birth of Christ. It is celebrated in the history of Christianity, to which it was converted about the third year of the reign of Nero, for the preaching and the miracles of St. Paul, who, having been cast on its shore by a shipwreck, was taken by a centurion to Rome to be there tried :—

"And when they were escaped," says St. Luke, "then they knew that the Island was called Melita.

"And the barbarous people showed us no little kindness : for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.

"And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened upon his hand.

"And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.

"And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.

"Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen,

or fallen down dead suddenly: but, after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

"In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius, who received us and lodged us three days courteously.

"And it came to pass that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever, and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and, prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.

"So, when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came and were healed:

"Who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary." (Acts xxviii. 1—10.)

Historians are not agreed as to the point where the great apostle landed; but an immemoriable tradition in the country relates that it was on a neck of land on the north coast, which the people still visit with reverence and which is habitually denominated *Calle* of St. Paul.

According to the same tradition, this Publius, who in the Acts of the Apostles is called the chief man of the island, was the Roman governor. He became not merely a disciple of the faith, but bishop of Malta, and the house in which he dwelt, converted into a church, was consecrated for divine worship.

From the Roman dominion Malta passed successively under that of the Goths, the Saracens, the counts and kings of Sicily, till at length in 1540 it devolved, by the cession of Charles V., to the knights of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. It thenceforward acquired an importance with which were connected the highest interests of European civilization: it was the bulwark of Christendom. Plunged in a stupid indifference, how many persons are there at this day, who know not that the waves of Mahometanism, which threatened so long to overwhelm the West, were broken by the rocks of Malta, defended by its brave knights, and that if our Europe, so smitten with the charms of liberty and independence, is not now ignominiously dragging the chains of slavery

under the yoke of some sultan, it is owing, in part, at least, to those heroes of the faith, to those pious warriors, whose institution—so it was decreed by Providence—sprang up in an hospital, amidst paupers, and in the city where Christ, the supreme model of devotedness, died for the salvation of mankind.

"Shut up at first in an hospital," says their most illustrious historian, Vertot, "notwithstanding the arduous and humiliating attendance on the poor and the sick, finding in themselves sufficient zeal and strength to take arms against the declared enemies of the Christian name, they knew how to combine the different virtues of two opposite professions.

"The dress of these monks was simple and modest: they reserved magnificence for the decoration of the altars. The pilgrims and the poor benefited by their frugal table; they went forth from the sick to engage in prayer, or to march against the enemies of the cross. That cross was at once their badge and their standard. There was no ambition in a martial body in which dignities were attained only by the path of virtue. Charity, the first of their obligations, and of the virtues of Christianity, never forsook them even against the infidels, and what advantage soever they won in fight, satisfied with disarming those barbarians, they sought, even in the bosom of victory, only to convert them, or at least to disable them from injuring Christians."

This, it is true, was the golden age of St. John of Jerusalem; but, though in the sequel they sometimes relaxed in the austere practice of so many different virtues, still, "notwithstanding this effect of human weakness," continues the same historian, "I do not think that among all the military orders scattered over different countries of Christendom, there is to be found one in which disinterestedness, purity of morals and intrepidity in the greatest dangers, in which, I say, these virtues were so long honoured, and in which luxury and the love of wealth and pleasure were introduced later."

If, in spite of the dissolute manners and the perverse doctrines that desolate the world, the faith which Malta received from St. Paul, has maintained itself there in

such force and such purity, if there are still to be found in its numerous and magnificent churches, admirable institutions of charity, vast and superb public and private edifices; if the same stratum of mould which covers the rock has at last yielded to the efforts of agriculture, furnished abundance of delicious fruits, and seconded the labours of industry; if, with magazines, arsenals, and all the establishments requisite for the wants of a formidable naval force; if, with excellent harbours, the whole island is defended by fortifications which render it impregnable unless by perfidy and treachery—to whom is due the honour of all this, if not to that long series of warriors, among whom the Lille Adams and the Lavalettes had so many worthy successors, and who, almost all of them, to the last, nobly formed the advanced guard of Christian society, whenever it needed defending against its enemies.

The words *perfidy* and *treachery* have just fallen from my pen, and while writing them, I must confess, my dear friend, that I felt my heart heave with indignation. Yes, it was perfidy, the blackest perfidy, it was treachery, the most impious treachery, that, by surrendering the inexpugnable ramparts, which, since my arrival here, I have never ceased admiring, gave the death-blow to the illustrious Order that constituted its glory, and prepared for Catholic Malta the melancholy lot which is now its portion.

You know, my dear friend, who it was that in 1798 went forth at the head of forty thousand men, to conquer Egypt for a republic whose merciless destroyer heaven decreed that he should one day be. He had the mission to surprise Malta by the way, and to take possession of it. Emissaries of the revolutionary propaganda had introduced themselves into the island, where they had secretly organized insurrection, and — O monstrous treason!—some of those who wore the cross on their breasts, whose most solemn oaths bound them to defend it, were engaged in their plot. In order to provoke revolt, and to reap the advantages anticipated from it, a pretext only was wanting: Bonaparte found it in the pretended necessity for revictualling his fleet and pro-

curing water. He asked leave for his ships to enter the harbours all at once. He was told that they should be admitted only four at a time, and was referred to the stipulations on this head determined by treaties between the Christian powers. This answer was construed as an insult, and nearly at the same moment, a council of war having been held, the troops received orders to land, with the precaution, however, to manifest only the intention of taking that which they had been unjustly refused. But perfidy soon threw off the mask: the factions showed themselves everywhere; the alarm and the confusion were general. The irresolution and want of concert of the heads of the Maltese government taken unawares, the cries and the complaints of the people, who considered themselves as betrayed, the massacre of several faithful officers, all concurred to increase the disorder, and to hasten the final catastrophe. In three days, without siege, without any other combat than a paltry fray with ignoble conspirators, or a few platoons of soldiers, the island surrendered. A disgraceful capitulation was signed; the Order of Malta ceased to exist, and the faithful knights were compelled to seek elsewhere an asylum where they might hide their grief. The conqueror hastily plundered the treasury, the churches, the hospital, the palaces, the archives; then, carrying with him such of the inhabitants and of the knights whose treachery had been most serviceable to him, he hurried away to the Nile, to brag to the Egyptians of the victory which he had just won over the enemies of the Crescent, and to proclaim that there is no God but God, and that Mahomet is his Prophet.

In reporting to his government the taking of Malta, Bonaparte wrote:—"we have in the centre of the Mediterranean the strongest fortress in Europe, and it will cost those dear who shall dislodge us." But scarcely had two years elapsed before the English were masters of it, without its having cost them much. It is still their's, and the treaty of 1814 between all the great powers, seems to have insured them a long and peaceable possession of the island.

It is painful, no doubt, to the Maltese people, so pious,

so eminently Catholic, not to live any longer under the paternal laws of an order which, for three centuries, was its happiness and its glory; more painful still, to be under the sway of a nation which has neither the same religion nor the same manners. How much less is it to be pitied, however, than when it was forced to wear the yoke imposed by men, belonging by birth to the same faith, but corrupted and perverted by the degrading doctrines of modern impiety! Though a deplorable schism separates England from the Romish church, the English government has the right spirit to grant to the Catholic worship the same protection as if it were its own. It treats the bishop with respect and consideration; it requires the civil and military authorities to pay the greatest honours to the high dignity with which he is invested; and this respect, this consideration, this protection, are never manifested more conspicuously than when the difference of religions may have occasioned some disturbance, some irreverence.

A major having one day attempted to pass through a procession on horseback, the people requested him to stop; the major insisted on proceeding, and employed threats. He was ill-used, and had well-nigh fallen a victim to his obstinacy. No sooner had he escaped the danger than he hastened to lay his complaints before the governor, who, so far from thinking them just, severely condemned his conduct. The same officer became in the sequel a general, and afterwards governor of the island, and might have made some of the Maltese feel his vengeance. But he remembered his fault only to prevent his subordinates from committing the like, and showed not less zeal in protecting the Catholic ceremonies, than he, whose reproaches he had incurred.

The palace where the English governors reside, is the very same which the grand-masters inhabited, and which they decorated with numerous ornaments, destined to perpetuate the glory of the Order—pictures, coats of arms, statues; among others, that of the immortal Jean de Lavalette, who, in 1665 victoriously withstood eighty thousand Turks, commanded by Solyman; a statue unworthily overthrown and profaned, at the time of the

invasion of the revolutionary barbarians, who forgot that the hero was a Frenchman.

The present governor is general Ponsonby, whom I knew in 1810 in Spain, where I served as general.

Among his predecessors, the one who has left the most honourable memorials at Malta is the marquis of Hastings, who died there a few years since. None has performed his functions in a more noble, more disinterested, more generous manner. He had previously been governor of India, and had there won general esteem. I was acquainted with him when he bore the name of Lord Moria: he honoured me with his warm friendship, and took pleasure in giving me proofs of it. I deemed it a duty, owing to gratitude, to visit his tomb, at which I tarried a considerable time.

Among the persons whom I had formerly known, and whom I found here, there are few that I have again met with so much pleasure as Mr. Frere, the English minister in Spain at the time of my sojourn in that country. Informed, at the very first moment, of my arrival, he lost no time in calling to see me, and he has continued ever since to give me the most amiable testimonies of his kindness. He is the father of the poor at Malta; it is his happiness to relieve, as far as was in his power, all distresses, all misfortunes. His name is, consequently, revered by the inhabitants.

Malta, though fallen from the high rank in which it was placed by its destination till the end of the last century, and, notwithstanding all the calamities that it has suffered, is still worthy of the whole attention of the traveller. Its numerous monuments, religious, civil, and military, its churches, most of them very remarkable, and among which is particularly distinguished that of St. John, the patron of the Order, its statues of St. Paul, which are met with in every quarter, its hospital, its aqueduct, a work worthy of the Romans, which conveys the water necessary for all purposes from one city to the other, its magnificent quays, its extensive dock-yard, its immense basins, the fortifications with which its soil is thickly set, will long attest what religion and glory have made of that rock where Lille Adam, when he took pos-

session of it, could scarcely find a house to dwell in, where the commanders and the knights had, at first, no other *alberghi* than a few wretched fishermen's huts. And to those to whom such great works shall fail to proclaim to what men they are due, the monuments of the dead will speak. Vandalism had not time to execute what it meditated, to scatter the dust of the sepulchres, to break the stones, or to efface the inscriptions. In the chapels are still to be found the tombs of the grand-masters, which record their piety, their valour, and their exploits. I have visited those august tombs, my dear friend, and I have dropped a tear upon them. I have mourned before them over Europe, so blind to her dearest interests, as to do with her own hand what the Mussulman had in vain tried for ages to effect, and to sanction the destruction of an establishment which was one of the firmest props of Christian society, its defence, and the terror of its foes. A member of that Order, which a false wisdom allowed to perish, a knight of St. John of Jerusalem, I wished at least to carry with me the consolation of having pressed my lips to the venerable names recorded on those monuments, and deposited in the sanctuaries which contain them, my homage, and my regret . . . . . .

While penning this effusion, my dear Charles, I have received letters, the contents of which derange all my plans. Painful as is to me the idea of renouncing the visit to Italy, and to Rome in particular, I am compelled to add that sacrifice to so many others. Important business calls me elsewhere, and will detain me for a time that I cannot yet calculate. If I can meet with a vessel at Genoa, I shall not fail to take advantage of it, and, unless fresh obstacles arise, I shall proceed immediately, by the shortest route, to the Abbey of St. Urban. If anything can mitigate the pain of so unexpected a disappointment, it is the good news brought me by the same letters, that our monks of La Trappe are happily reinstated in the monastery of the Mount of Olives, from which they were cruelly expelled, that they are now living there in peace, and that I am permitted to return to my brethren.

LETTER LVIII.

Departure from Malta—Violent Storm—Arrival at Marseilles—Return to the Abbey of St. Urban.

St. Urban, December 22d, 1833.

Here I am, at the end of my pilgrimage, my dear friend; I am at St. Urban.

I had reckoned upon obtaining a passage from Malta to Genoa, as I told you in my last letter. After waiting much longer than I liked, for some ship, and waiting in vain, I changed my plan, and resolved to trust myself to the Eagle, an English brig, bound to Marseilles. The weather was terrible: we were forced to make our passage amidst continual storms. Never did I suffer so much at sea in my life. For twenty-four hours, at least, our situation appeared desperate: we gave ourselves up for lost. I could read in every face the apprehension of an imminent, inevitable catastrophe, and I shared the general anxiety. In this alarming state, the crew, harassed to death, exhibited a most affecting religious spectacle. Notwithstanding the incessant howling of the wind, notwithstanding the rapid succession of the lightning, notwithstanding the frequent bursts of the thunder that rolled incessantly over our heads, evening prayer was not once interrupted. Never, in the silence and the seclusion of the convent, did I hear the anthems and the litanies of the blessed Virgin sung with greater fervour and adoration. The captain was the first to set the example. The tones of his powerful and sonorous voice, to which those of all the sailors unanimously responded—those strains animated by a lively faith and confidence, at times, got the better of the din of the angry elements. Our prayers were heard: the vessel escaped all dangers, and reached her port without accident.

From Marseilles I pursued my way to St. Urban, travelling rapidly through France, wholly engrossed by my sorrow, at not having it in my power to go to Rome.

I had nothing to console myself but the thought that I was going to rejoin those good monks who had before given me an asylum, and to return to my worthy and reverend Father, the abbé Don Pierre, and my brethren, to receive new testimonies of their charity, and to derive from the daily example of their virtues new strength and new courage for worthily finishing the career of penitence, which the Lord has granted me to pursue.

At length, yesterday evening the gates of the hospitable abbey opened to admit me. The community had been forewarned of my speedy return. I was impatiently expected, and welcomed with a lively but perfectly Christian joy, with that joy which is expressed by bursts of grateful piety, by eagerness to return thanks, by fervent prayers in behalf of him whom infinite goodness has deigned to protect, and to bring back without accident into the bosom of the religious family.

'Farewell, my dear Charles! Mingle your thanksgivings with our's: remember me always before God, and be assured that in my retirement I shall never forget you. Christians love each other for eternity.

THE END.